



Gen Otto P. Weyland, USAF

Close Air Support in the Korean War

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Abstract

This study analyzes Gen O. P. Weyland's impact on close air support (CAS) during the Korean War. First, the author briefly traces the history and evolution of air-ground support from its infancy to the start of the Korean War. Second, he shifts his focus to the effectiveness of CAS throughout the conflict and addresses why this mission was controversial for the Army and Air Force. Third, he highlights General Weyland's perspective on tactical airpower and his role in the close-air-support "controversy." Throughout his career, Weyland was a staunch advocate of tactical airpower. As Patton's Airman in World War II, Far East Air Force commander in Korea, and the commander of Tactical Air Command in the mid-1950s, Weyland helped the tactical air community to carve out its role as a critical instrument of national power.

About the Author

Lt Col Michael J. Chandler, a native of Waterloo, Iowa, received his commission through the United States Air Force Academy in 1986. He remained at the academy and served as a graduate student assistant football coach for one year. Graduating from pilot training in 1988, he was assigned to fly OA-10s at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (AFB), Tucson, Arizona. In 1992, Colonel Chandler transitioned to the F-15C and was sent to Langley AFB, Virginia. After a subsequent tour at Kadena Air Base, Japan, he returned to Langley in 1999 and served as the F-15 East Coast demonstration pilot. He attended Air Command and Staff College in 2002 and graduated from the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS) in 2003. Colonel Chandler has flown over 100 combat missions in Iraq and is a command pilot with over 3,000 hours in the A/OA-10 and the F-15 Eagle. Upon graduation from SAASS, he was assigned to Nellis AFB, Nevada, as the commander of the Thunderbirds for the 2004–5 demonstration seasons.

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Chapter 1

Close Air Support in 2006

We will not stand toe-to-toe with our Army brethren over this. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder.

—Gen Hal M. Hornburg

Throughout the history of military airpower, close air support (CAS) has been one of the most widely debated issues between the Air Force and Army. Even in 2006, in the era of unprecedented joint operations, the CAS controversy has managed to take center stage in military discussions. In a recent issue of *Air Force Times*, a headline on the front cover read: “Return fire: ACC boss responds to critics of close-air.”¹ As advertised, the article focused on Gen Hal M. Hornburg’s response to statements made by the Army with respect to CAS missions flown during Operation Anaconda. In particular, General Hornburg, the commander of Air Combat Command, took issue with several statements made by Maj Gen Franklin L. “Buster” Hagenbeck. General Hagenbeck, commander of ground forces in Afghanistan for Operation Anaconda, was interviewed for an article published in the September-October 2002 issue of *Field Artillery* magazine.² In that article, Hagenbeck was quoted as saying, “It took anywhere from 26 minutes to hours (on occasion) for the precision munitions to hit the targets. That’s OK if you’re not being shot at or targets aren’t fleeting such as the SUVs [support utility vehicles] the al Qaeda used for resupply. When the SUVs stopped to unload and if they stayed in one place long enough, the fixed-wing aircraft would slam them.”³ In response to the first of three negative assertions made by General Hagenbeck, General Hornburg stated that “for some of the platforms [aircraft] providing support to Task Force Mountain that was true. A comprehensive review of all USAF [United States Air Force] platforms, however, showed close-air-support targets were engaged in an unprecedented average of only five minutes from the first call for fire to weapons impact.”⁴

In addition to the response issue, General Hagenbeck also criticized the actual effectiveness of precision-weapon capable platforms against moving targets. While singing the praises of the A-10 and AC-130, Hagenbeck was less than enthusiastic about the aircraft utilizing precision-guided munitions against the so-called “fleeting” targets. He noted that ‘by the time the AWACS [Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft] handed a target off, the Air Force said it took 26 minutes to calculate the DMP [desired mean point of impact], which is required to ensure the precision munition hits the target. . . . A ground force commander does not care about number of sorties being flown or the number and types of weapons being dropped. All that matters is whether or not the munitions are time-on-target and provide the right effects.”⁵

In the *Air Force Times* article, General Hornburg identified joint planning as one of the reasons Operation Anaconda suffered in its execution. However, in defense of his Airmen, Hornburg replied that “with minimal notice to plan, the Combined Air Operations Center generated 900 attack missions which dropped more than 15,000 weapons on targets in an area smaller than Prince Sultan, and operated in airspace almost as restrictive as our nation’s capital.”⁶

The final issue cited by Hagenbeck was the Air Force’s inability to allocate enough controllers to coordinate the CAS attacks in the field. While General Hornburg didn’t address the controller issue specifically, the *Air Force Times* article stated the Air Force position on the matter. According to an unidentified senior Air Force official who is supposedly familiar with CAS issues, “The Air Force has enough controllers to meet Army requirements.”⁷

On the surface of this recent combat operation, it would appear that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Unfortunately, despite being the most technological advanced military in the world and having arguably the best trained Airmen and soldiers in uniform, the United States armed forces cannot put the controversy to rest. In 2006, as evidenced by the recent exchange in the media, the issues include response time, effectiveness against moving targets with precision weapons, and a lack of tactical air controllers in the field. In the past, issues at hand included some of these and such concerns as doctrine, the best type of aircraft suited to fly CAS, and the most effective command and control system. While General Hornburg defends the Air Force of today, he should take comfort in the fact that he is not the only tactical commander in Air Force history to be put on the defensive regarding the CAS mission. One of the most notable commanders was Gen Otto P. Weyland, who, like Hornburg, graduated from Texas A&M University.⁸

General Weyland’s impact as a senior leader in the Air Force may be divided into three distinct phases. The first phase was his role as commander, 19th Tactical Air Command (TAC) during World War II. This organization provided direct air support to Gen George S. Patton and his Third Army during their rapid march across France in the spring of 1945. In the second phase, Weyland served both as the vice commander and commander of Far East Air Forces (FEAF) during the Korean War. In addition, he assisted Japan with the reorganization of its air defense and aircraft industry. In the final phase of his military career, Weyland served as the commander of TAC before retiring in 1959.⁹

Throughout his career, Weyland was a staunch advocate of tactical air-power. However, he also believed in the soldier on the ground and the importance of joint operations. After participating in probably the most successful tactical air campaign in history during World War II, Weyland took command of the FEAF in Korea and faced many criticisms regarding the Air Force’s performance in the CAS mission. Like General Hornburg in 2002, Weyland was forced to respond to those criticisms both during and

after the Korean War. In light of the continuing CAS controversy, it's appropriate to take a historical look at CAS in the Korean War.

The Korean War

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it examines the effectiveness of tactical airpower during the Korean War and the issues that defined the CAS controversy. Second, the paper highlights the career of one of the most influential advocates of tactical airpower the Air Force has ever had. As the air component commander during the war and the commander of TAC shortly after the war, Weyland was the man to deal with the criticisms of CAS and tactical airpower. Weyland's impact during World War II has been reasonably well documented in David N. Spires' *Air Power for Patton's Army*. The final phase of Weyland's career as commander of TAC has also been covered in fairly good detail. However, the middle phase of Weyland's career, as the senior Airman in Korea, has not been documented to its full extent and remains a defining time in the history of the United States Air Force. As such, it will be discussed here.

In light of General Hagenbeck's criticisms in Operation Anaconda, why is understanding the history of Air Force and Army CAS operations important to today's CAS relationship between the two services? The answer is illustrated through a working relationship built on trust and teamwork. This essay serves as a reminder to both Airmen and soldiers of a time when Army and Air Force relations regarding CAS were strained. In 2006, the joint working relationship within the Armed Forces is at an unprecedented level of success. However, tomorrow's relationship could be in jeopardy if the services don't remember the path they used to get there. In the case of CAS, "Understanding the roots of our traditional differences should help both services better comprehend each other's positions today."¹⁰

Overview of the Paper

Chapter 2 of this paper provides a brief historical look at the evolution of air-ground operations, emphasizing the agreed upon employment of CAS at the end of World War II. Chapter 3 summarizes General Weyland's career before his first assignment in Korea. Chapter 4 introduces the reader to most of the issues that defined the CAS controversy during the Korean War. Chapter 5 focuses on General Weyland's constant struggle with the Army over CAS and his perspective on air-ground operations. Chapter 6 provides a summary of CAS in the Korean War, the impact of General Weyland's leadership, and the lessons learned in Korea that military leaders can apply to the current CAS mission.

Notes

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

1. Rolfsen, "Commander Defends Anaconda Air Support," n.p.

CLOSE AIR SUPPORT IN 2006

2. Robert H. McElroy, "Afghanistan, Fire Support for Operation Anaconda," 5–9; and Grant, "Clash about CAS," 54–59.
3. McElroy, "Afghanistan, Fire Support for Operation Anaconda," 8.
4. Rolfsen, "Commander Defends Anaconda Air Support," 20.
5. McElroy, "Afghanistan, Fire Support for Operation Anaconda," 8; and Rolfsen, "Commander Defends Anaconda Air Support," 20.
6. Rolfsen, "Commander Defends Anaconda Air Support," 20.
7. Ibid.
8. "Fourth Star," *AggieCorps.org*, n.p., <http://www.aggiecorps.org/home/former/distinguished/military/hornburg/fourthstar> (accessed 17 February 2003). Weyland and Hornburg are two of only six A&M graduates who have achieved the four-star rank. General Weyland, class of 1923, was the first, and General Hornburg, class of 1968, was the most recent. Other four-star Texas A&M Aggies include Bernard A. Schriever, class of 1931; Joseph W. Ashy, class of 1962; Patrick K. Gamble, class of 1967; and Navy admiral Jerome L. Johnson, class of 1956.
9. "General Otto Paul Weyland," *Air Force Official Biography* (United States Air Force), n. p., http://www.af.mil/news/biographies/weyland_op.html (accessed 11 November 2002). The Air University Library has a small section of binders with biographical information on former Air Force generals. Under Weyland, multiple versions of his official Air Force biography (online version) were available. Besides the online version, specific details were extracted from two or three different library printouts (No reference data available for binder).
10. Lewis, *Lt Gen Ned Almond*, 80.

Chapter 2

History and Evolution of Close Air Support

World War I to the Korean War

The time has come when aviation must be developed for aviation's sake and not as an auxiliary to other existing branches. Unless the progressive elements that enter into our makeup are availed of, we will fall behind in the world's development. Air power has rudely upset the traditions of the older services. It has been with the greatest difficulty that this new and dominating element has gone forward in the way it has. In the future, no nation can call itself great unless its air power is properly organized and provided for, because air power, both from a military and an economic standpoint, will not only dominate the land but the sea as well.

—Brig Gen William Mitchell, 1925

While many airpower advocates identify the successful tactical air campaigns of World War II as the foundation for modern-day CAS doctrine, the actual idea of using aircraft to attack military targets on the ground in direct support of ground forces has been around for many years. According to Ronald R. Fogleman, "As early as 1910 a passenger fired a rifle from an army aircraft; in January, 1911, army pilots presented a bombing demonstration at San Francisco; and on June 7, 1912, a pair of army aviators fired a machine gun from an aircraft with good accuracy against ground targets."¹ By adding firepower to the airplane, these pioneering aviators had discovered the key to the effective use of airpower in warfare.² At the beginning of World War I, airpower was technology-limited to the role of observation. To the participants, however, it soon became obvious that the advantage lay with the side that could maintain its own observation capability while denying the same to the enemy. After limited exchanges with hand-held weapons, air engagements changed significantly as machine guns were mounted on aircraft. While the machine gun facilitated air-to-air combat, interested parties soon realized that the airplane could be used to attack targets on the ground. Thus, the year 1915 marked the dawn of both air-to-air and air-to-ground combat.³

United States Experience in World War I

By the time the United States entered World War I on 6 April 1917, most participants already had learned several valuable lessons regarding air-power employment.⁴ The United States, like the other major participants, entered the war unprepared to conduct aerial warfare. In the case of the

United States, this failure was especially noteworthy, considering the three-year grace period in which an opportunity existed to rectify the situation.⁵ Probably the most discussed problem area leading up to the war concerned the proper organization of the air arm within the Army. Airmen struggled with their place in the Army organization. Moreover, how aviation would be used doctrinally was intimately connected to the manner of its organization.⁶ While such future airpower leaders as Benjamin D. Foulois, Henry H. Arnold, and William Mitchell championed the early success of airpower, they lacked the necessary resources to develop doctrine that would secure its rightful place on the battlefield. The nature of the military establishment constrained the development of aviation doctrine. Fogleman, also a former chief of staff of the United States Air Force, highlighted the predicament faced by those airpower pioneers, saying, "The truly knowledgeable aviators in this country were relatively junior officers who, without the benefit of first class professional schools or experience with peacetime exercises, carried little authority in the councils of war. Inadequate and unrealistic air ground maneuvers delayed development and gave aviators little support for their admittedly sparse pre-war ideas. The only way to sell the airmen's theories of armed aircraft employment was to prove the hypotheses on the battlefield."⁷

Although it was established as a section of the Signal Corps in 1907, airpower did not achieve statutory recognition until July 1914. Its unofficial status as the baby of the Signal Corps also foreshadowed a widening personality rift between the aviators and their nonflying superiors.⁸ Because of their sometimes adversarial position, Army leadership saw aviators as outspoken and too indifferent with respect to traditional military customs. Brig Gen George P. Scriven, the chief Signal Corps officer in 1916, described his aviation officers as "unbalanced as to grades, young in years and service, and deficient in discipline and the proper knowledge to the customs of the service and the duties of an officer."⁹ Scriven further exclaimed that behind their "unmilitary, insubordinate, and disloyal acts was a burning ambition to set up a new and independent organization for aviation."¹⁰

With the war under way, Col William "Billy" Mitchell was sent to Paris in advance of the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) to observe Allied airpower operations and hopefully ascertain the true nature of air warfare. When Gen John J. Pershing, commander of the AEF, arrived in theater on 13 June 1917, Mitchell presented him with a report detailing his observations of the preceding three months. Mitchell believed that (1) aerial superiority was a prerequisite to other successful air operations; (2) control of the air is best gained through offensive action against the enemy air force; (3) when air attacks against enemy air forces and vital areas were carried out, enemy action against friendly forces decreased; (4) limiting the Air Service to reconnaissance and observation failed to take advantage of the air weapon; the war could be taken to the enemy by bombing and strafing; (5) airpower was more effective if concentrated under a single command.¹¹ While many of Mitchell's thoughts were valid based on the evidence, Army

leadership had difficulty accepting airpower's newly defined position in the overall scheme of maneuver. Personality and the aforementioned organizational problems were a factor, but the main reason the report was not accepted was that ground soldiers and aviators had different opinions regarding airpower employment.

In the end, the ground officer's point of view won out because the war had to be fought and won with available weapons, not on airpower theory. The nature of war dictated the impact that American airpower would be able to make. By 1918, the western front had stagnated into a war of attrition and complex ground operations. Because they had neither the manpower nor the equipment to significantly change the nature of the struggle, American forces were left to adjust. Thomas H. Greer remembers that "it was a struggle of infantry, trenches, and artillery; of attack and counterattack; of attrition and reinforcement."¹² Brig Gen Mason M. Patrick, the appointed Air Service chief as of 27 July 1918, stated the official Air Service philosophy: "The Air Service originates and suggests employment for its units but the final decision is vested in the commanding general of the larger units, of which the Air Service forms a part."¹³

By the time the Air Service of the AEF became fully operational in the summer of 1918, more than a year had passed since Mitchell had expressed his ambitious ideas to Pershing. The process of organizing, training, and equipping the American war machine had partly limited the Air Service's ability to fully test the theories that Mitchell and others proposed. The cessation of hostilities on 11 November 1918 left all concerned parties with many unanswered questions regarding the most effective way to employ airpower in the future. While aviators saw the possibilities of a different kind of war and a more effective use of airpower, their junior voice carried little weight with the senior Army leadership. As long as a ground soldier controlled the use of airpower, there was little chance that airplanes would be used for other than direct support of ground operations. In his memoirs, General Pershing summed up the situation, "Flyers attach too much importance to missions behind enemy lines for the purpose of interrupting communications . . . his was of secondary importance during the battle, as aviators were then expected to assist ground troops. In other words, they were to drive off hostile airplanes and procure for the infantry and artillery information concerning the enemy's movement."¹⁴

The statistics of US Air Service activities in World War I have been viewed as less than impressive. Because aviation as a whole did not significantly influence the outcome of the war, it is safe to say that attack aviation played an even lesser decisive role.¹⁵ Undoubtedly, aircraft technology severely limited the impact of airpower during the war. In the case of both pursuit and attack aviation, the effect of arming an aircraft did not come to fruition until combat experience dictated the need for an offensive capability.¹⁶ Although the Germans in the latter part of the war employed attack aviation effectively, the United States was not able to develop the technology to organize and employ units like those of the Germans. Hence,

the unfulfilled experience factor, which is extremely important in the development of doctrine, surfaced here. According to Fogelman, “Of all the sources and influences affecting the evolution of a ground attack doctrine in the United States Army during the period 1910–1918, the most important was the personal experience of the professional military men as they responded to the tactical demands of a combat situation. This was the one source which would not be available to sustain interest in the attack mission during the post-war years.”¹⁷

The Interwar Years

When World War I came to an end, the United States was the leading economic and military power in the world. However, it would only take a few months for the country to enter a “period of self-imposed isolationism” that would affect foreign policy and the development of military forces in the interwar years.¹⁸ Although the airplane had made an impression in the war, airpower advocates faced an uphill battle in trying to develop doctrine and establish it as an effective weapon of national defense. According to Robert T. Finney, “In the 16 years from 1919 to 1934 no less than 14 principal boards considered the problems of national defense, the chief one being: how was the air weapon to be fitted into the over-all structure of national defense?”¹⁹ In *The Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm, 1917–1941*, Thomas Greer observes that differences in the relative importance of airpower even took a backseat to fundamental differences regarding the nature of war. Army and Navy leaders felt that World War I was a prototype for future warfare, while airpower enthusiasts “tended to discount that experience and to see future conflicts in terms of the potentialities unveiled by the war. . . . It became a symbol—and to the air leaders a target—in the running fight over military doctrine.”²⁰ Nonetheless, the four major roles of the aircraft were established postwar and provided the foundation for interwar development: pursuit, observation, attack, and bombardment.

During the early interwar period, Mitchell continued to pursue many of the dictums he presented in his earlier war report to Pershing. For example, pursuit was still considered the dominant arm of aviation, and its primary role was air superiority. Once command of the air was achieved, pursuit aviation would be expected to “attack personnel, equipment, airdromes, troop concentrations, naval vessels, and debarkation operations.”²¹ The outspoken Airman also championed the creation of attack aviation and helped set out its role as a distinct organizational element specializing in ground attack. Lee Kennett recounts Mitchell’s view of ground attack aviation at the time: “During offensives, attack squadrons operate over and in front of the infantry and neutralize the fire of the enemy’s infantry and barrage batteries. On the defensive, the appearance of attack airplanes affords visible proof to heavily engaged troops that Headquarters is maintaining close touch with the front, and is employing all possible auxiliaries to support the fighting troops.”²²

Despite showing some progress in the early 1920s, the development of attack aviation in the Air Service was hindered by at least three factors. First, the new branch of aviation was having problems with doctrine and with defining its role. After the war, the United States was the only country in the world to have a specialized ground attack force (3d Attack Group). As such, there was little opportunity to learn from other air forces.²³ For most aviators, attack aviation was a “postwar creation with no past, no combat tradition, and no backlog of practical experience.”²⁴ The one exception were the Marines who flew air support missions in Nicaragua: “The Marines’ experience in air support was rich and varied. Airplanes served as artillery, in which the Marines were deficient; they intervened in sieges and battles where very little space separated the contending forces; they flew escort missions for columns; and they detected and broke up enemy attempts at ambush. In subsequent campaigns and exercises, the Marines were to build up a sizable fund of expertise on close air support, particularly related to amphibious operations.”²⁵

The second factor focused on aircraft technology. Downsizing and budget cuts within the military prevented the development of a satisfactory ground-attack aircraft.²⁶ After abandoning the heavily armed battle plane due to economics, the Air Service utilized the DH-4 observation plane from World War I. Still powered by the Liberty engine, ground-attack training was severely limited because the “worn-out DH-4s could not carry both bombs and machine guns at the same time.”²⁷ As of 1931, the “Army had a standard aircraft for observation, pursuit, and bombardment but not one for ground-attack aviation.”²⁸

The final factor that hampered the development of attack aviation was a growing organizational and philosophical difference between Airmen and soldiers on the role of airpower. Both believed that air superiority was the primary role of aviation. However, for the ground commander, once air superiority was achieved, “aircraft should focus on supporting ground forces and their operations.”²⁹ Furthermore, soldiers believed that each ground commander should command his own assets. Clearly, they accentuated the belief that airpower was an ancillary force to ground power. In contrast, Airmen began to suggest that ground support was not the only function of airpower after gaining air superiority. Gen Mason Patrick, commander of the Air Service in 1921, commented: “There is as distinct and definite a mission for the Air Force independent of the ground troops as there is for the Army and Navy independent of each other.”³⁰ Patrick further stated: “Airpower, when developed, could carry destruction to the vitals of an enemy nation, disrupt war industries, attack communications, and secure information otherwise inaccessible.”³¹ Airmen also believed that all air resources should be consolidated under one organization and commanded by an Airman. Instead of an ancillary force, Airmen saw airpower as “independent and coequal to land and sea forces.”³² The different viewpoints of airpower expressed by Airmen and soldiers were further highlighted in an Army War College presentation in 1925. Following a

speech by General Patrick that presented the Air Service's view on air-power, Maj Gen H. E. Ely, the commandant, replied as follows:

The Air Force should feel flattered by the high opinion we have of it; it isn't that we don't love them, we love them too much, we want them right with us all the time, but we don't want them where some higher air man can say, "Come back, we need you somewhere else." About the time the commander-in-chief of the Army wants the Air Service, it will be like the Cavalry often was in the Civil War, chasing wagon trains—the Air Service will be off bombing a factory somewhere when the commander-in-chief will want to bomb a certain objective. We had the experience—and this is a personal experience, not from hearsay—where the Air Service given [sic] a corps or division commander flitted away without fully transacting its business. That is why it is now an organic part of the corps and divisions.³³

As of 1926 and with the publication of training manual (TM) 440-15, *Fundamental Principles for the Employment of the Air Service*, attack aviation was best accomplished by placing those attack aircraft directly under the command of the ground commander to accomplish his objectives.³⁴

Besides the organizational difference, a philosophical difference also surfaced. When conducting the attack mission, each side divided the battlefield environment differently. Army commanders tended to believe that air support should focus on frontline operations to better protect ground forces and boost morale. In addition, air support should focus on enemy trenches, troop concentrations, and gun positions. Airmen believed attacks close to the front line were inherently wasteful, inefficient, and excessively dangerous.³⁵ As such, Airmen argued that proper targets for attack missions started at the "far range of indigenous artillery support within each ground organization."³⁶ They emphasized that "there were times when indirect action was more effective than direct."³⁷ These differences created a misunderstanding between Army and air forces that was not fully resolved until World War II.

By the late 1920s, Airmen began to shift their priorities on how best to employ airpower. At the forefront, strategic bombardment replaced pursuit as the top priority, and the bomber became the critical asset. Airmen prophesied that strategic aerial bombardment was a mission to be "conducted independently of surface operations and should become an end in itself."³⁸ Air-minded officers such as Mitchell, Arnold, and Spaatz, continually fueled the separate air force debate. They publicly reasoned that "strategic bombing justified independence," and that independence, in turn, enabled strategic bombing to fulfill its potential.³⁹ Following the ideas of Giulio Douhet, Hugh Trenchard, and eventually Mitchell, the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) developed the industrial web theory—a well-defined, conceptually solid doctrine that capitalized on the destruction of infrastructure to affect enemy morale and his ability to sustain the war effort: "The principal and all important mission of air power, when its equipment permits, is the attack of those vital objectives in a nation's economic structure which will tend to paralyze the nation's ability to wage war and thus

contribute directly to the attainment of the ultimate objective of war, namely, the disintegration of the hostile will to resist.”⁴⁰

The World War I experience of stalemate on the ground seemed to support the Air Corps’ new doctrine. While strategic bombing doctrine flourished at ACTS, pursuit and attack doctrine took a backseat. Although war manuals, such as TM 440-15, claimed that air support was a primary mission for the Air Corps, attack doctrine was not sufficiently debated or developed at ACTS. One exception was Capt George C. Kenney. Kenney, considered the most influential attack instructor at ACTS, wrote a textbook on attack aviation and developed tactics, utilizing members of his school classes during airborne exercises. “It was during this period that Kenney developed many of the techniques and some of the weapons that were to prove successful under his Southwest Pacific air command in World War II.”⁴¹ Nonetheless, after Kenney departed, attack aviation suffered a decline. The development of the B-17 in 1935 further validated strategic bombing. While one of the most important airpower accomplishments of the 1930s, the development of the bomber and its doctrine of employment “had a retarding effect upon attack, pursuit, and all other aviation activities.”⁴² In sum, throughout the interwar period, air support was developed in a “disjointed and haphazard fashion” and was somewhat in the shadows.⁴³

World War II

The outbreak of war in 1939 seemed to rekindle some of the support for tactical aviation that was lost between the wars. The early success of the German Army in dominating Poland, France, and the Low Countries seemed to give credence to the air-ground mission and generated a feeling in the armed forces that this modus operandi was a road map for success. German tactical air doctrine subordinated airpower under the ground commander and utilized it to provide direct support for ground forces. German doctrine also embraced the fundamental concept of achieving air superiority over the battlefield. By employing blitzkrieg tactics, air and ground units worked as an integrated team to achieve the ground commander’s objectives.⁴⁴ While some Airmen were impressed by Hitler’s use of airpower, others felt that the true test of Hitler’s domination would come against such a formidable foe as Great Britain. A rather prophetic statement, the Battle of Britain would prove to be a major stumbling block for the German Luftwaffe. Lt Gen Elwood R. Quesada, a respected Airman and tactical airpower advocate, was one of those skeptics who felt that the early success of German air-ground operations was to be short-lived and that their doctrine was not sound. He was especially disappointed that soldiers and aviators alike would be so quick to adopt such a concept of operations, arguing the following:

This was the condition of Tactical Air Power on the eve of the greatest conflagration of all times. The complete lack of a concrete concept was conducive to a hysterical acceptance of the doctrines employed by the German Air Force. As a result of the decisive victories of the German Army in Poland, France, and the

Lowlands, some members of our armed forces became very outspoken on the precepts of Tactical Air Power as portrayed in these campaigns, and actively urged our adoption of their principles. Fortunately, the inherent fallacies of the German concept were finally recognized and rejected.⁴⁵

Quesada felt that the Germans violated two cardinal rules in the employment of tactical airpower. First, they failed to exploit the principle of mass. The Nazi idea of tactical airpower conceived airpower as an organic component of a ground unit. As such, airpower was subordinated to the ground commander and was used as an additional means of firepower for the ground unit to which it was assigned. Instead of using airpower en masse when the situation directed, each component of the ground force was augmented with an air force unit, subject to the direction and desire of that particular ground commander. Although tactical airpower was successful at first, Quesada suggests that its misapplication finally caught up with the Germans as the war progressed. In the end, it was not the most effective method of accelerating a ground campaign. Time and again, the failure of the Germans to mass airpower in support of their ground forces allowed the enemy to counter the attack. Thus, the German ground commanders unconsciously permitted their airpower to degenerate into an impotent factor.⁴⁶

The second rule of airpower the Germans violated was their inability to recognize that general or local air superiority must be achieved before a major campaign can be prosecuted. According to Quesada, the German's failure to understand this axiom was evidenced by their defeat in the Battle of Britain. The Germans did not have the foresight or imagination to project the flexibility of tactical airpower in any other role besides the immediate objectives confronting the ground unit. Moreover, this lack of imagination resulted in the construction of a stereotyped airplane that was suited for one particular task—immediate support of the ground force.⁴⁷ The result was that superior American and British fighters drove the Stuka dive-bomber from the skies. In the air war over Europe, Germany discovered that her equipment did not have the flexibility to achieve air superiority and support the ground force simultaneously.⁴⁸ Quesada emphasized that “the German Air Force found itself possessing weapons designed to support a surface campaign and feebly unprepared to engage in a war for domination of the air.”⁴⁹

In response to Germany’s expansion policy, Congress gave the Air Corps its “first in a series of very large budget increases.”⁵⁰ Additionally, the War Department directed the Army and Air Corps to conduct tests to develop improved cooperation and better command and control in the air-ground mission.⁵¹ By 1941, these tests culminated in large exercises that were conducted in the southeast (Arkansas, Louisiana, and the Carolinas). Kennett believes “they were the first extensive army-size exercises ever held, and they offered an excellent opportunity to experiment with air support.”⁵² In virtually all joint air-ground training maneuvers conducted from 1940 to 1941, the Army criticized the Army Air Corps (AAC) for being incapable of

fulfilling the ground support missions assigned to it. While some attributed this failure to the corps' commitment to the strategic mission and a shortage of tactical aircraft, the maneuvers of 1941 did nothing to sway the Army's disposition. Although the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps deployed a large number of aircraft in support of ground operations, most of the missions were flown in the role of interdiction, reconnaissance, or observation. From the Army's perspective, CAS received little attention. It had become clear that the AAC was conducting operations utilizing its own interpretation of air-ground doctrine. As the United States prepared for operations in Northwest Africa, a large number of US Army ground officers believed that Airmen lacked the "will, the ability, and the means to conduct a sustained campaign employing aircraft in close support of land units."⁵³

By the spring of 1942, the state of air-ground support caused great concern. In response to numerous shortcomings and criticisms, the War Department published Field Manual (FM) 31-35, *Aviation in Support of Ground Forces*, on 9 April 1942. This field manual stressed organizational and procedural arrangements for the air support mission.⁵⁴ Unfortunately for the Airman, this document supported the ground soldier's viewpoint of air-ground operations. The manual clarified several important points of contention. As to command and control, air forces were to be subordinate to the demands of the ground commander and the local situation. On the subject of air superiority, the manual conceded that local air superiority was desired and that attacks on the enemy's air forces might be necessary. However, the manual offset those concessions by emphasizing that the most important target at any one time will usually be that target that constitutes the greatest threat to the supported ground force. Furthermore, the ground commander of that supported ground unit has the authority to make the final decision as to target priorities and the execution of any particular air support mission.⁵⁵ Col William W. Momoyer, another tactical air veteran, later characterized the Airman's dissatisfaction with the new manual: "On the outbreak of the greatest conflagration in history, there was no adequate expression of a Tactical Air concept. What fragments that did exist were geared to the rapidity of the ground campaign, destroyed the flexibility of air operations, subordinated air actions to those of the ground forces, and provided no realistic imagination of that capability of air to exploit its diversity in making the maximum contribution to the over-all effort of both the ground and air battle."⁵⁶

To its credit, FM 31-35 attempted to achieve balance between the "extreme air and ground positions."⁵⁷ Moreover, it strived to highlight the importance of air-ground teamwork that was exhibited by the Germans at the start of the war. According to FM 31-35, "The basis of effective air support of ground forces is teamwork. The air and ground units in such operations in fact form a combat team. Each member of the team must have the technical skill and training to enable it to perform its part in the operation and a willingness to cooperate thoroughly."⁵⁸

In *Air Power for Patton's Army*, historian David N. Spires reasons that FM 31-35 was not the limiting factor for air-ground success at the start of the war: "Despite what might appear as an irreconcilable conflict between air and ground perspectives of the day, the joint action called for by the manual proved to be less a problem than the limited time available to absorb its precepts and to solve practical problems at the field level. . . . With Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa, a scant six months away. . . , There was not enough time."⁵⁹

Notes

1. Fogleman, "The Development of Ground Attack Aviation," 17.
2. Ibid.
3. Finney, "Development of Tactical Air Doctrine in the U. S. Air Force," 1.
4. Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, 19.
5. Fogleman, "Development of Ground Attack Aviation," 15.
6. Greer, *Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm*, 1.
7. Fogleman, "Development of Ground Attack Aviation in the United States Army Air Arm," 87.
8. Greer, *Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm*, 1.
9. Ibid., 2.
10. Ibid.
11. Finney, "Development of Tactical Air Doctrine in the U.S. Air Force," 5.
12. Greer, *Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm*, 3.
13. Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, 22.
14. Greer, *Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm*, 3.
15. Fogleman, "Development of Ground Attack Aviation in the United States Army Air Arm," 86-87; and Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, 27.
16. Fogleman, "Development of Ground Attack Aviation in the United States Army Air Arm," 86-87.
17. Ibid., 88.
18. Wolfert, "From ACTS to Cobra," 3.
19. Finney, "Development of Tactical Air Doctrine in the U.S. Air Force," 12.
20. Greer, *Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm*, 14.
21. Mowbray, *Fabric of Air Warfare*, 12.
22. Kennett, "Developments to 1939," 43.
23. Ibid., 45.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Lewis, "Lt Gen Ned Almond," 13.
27. Kennett, "Developments to 1939," 45.
28. Lewis, "Lt Gen Ned Almond," 13.
29. Wolfert, "From ACTS to Cobra," 4.
30. Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, 41.
31. Greer, *Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm*, 33.
32. Wolfert, "From ACTS to Cobra," 4.
33. Greer, *Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm*, 32-33.
34. Kennett, "Developments to 1939," 49.
35. Mowbray, *Fabric of Air Warfare*, 12-13; and Wolfert, "From ACTS to Cobra," 5.
36. Wolfert, "From ACTS to Cobra," 5.
37. Greer, *Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm*, 33.
38. Caddell, "Orphan of Unification," 17.
39. Ibid.

40. Greer, *Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm*, 53.
41. Ibid., 66.
42. Ibid., 67.
43. Kennett, "Developments to 1939," 46.
44. Momoyer, "A Concept of Tactical Air Operations," 8–9.
45. Quesada, "Tactical Air Power," 37.
46. Ibid., 37–38.
47. Ibid., 39.
48. Momoyer, "A Concept of Tactical Air Operations," 10.
49. Quesada, "Tactical Air Power," 38.
50. Mortensen, *A Pattern for Joint Operations*, 9.
51. Finney, "Development of Tactical Air Doctrine in the U.S. Air Force," 16.
52. Kennett, "Developments to 1939," 55.
53. Syrett, "Tunisian Campaign," 157.
54. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 4.
55. Mortensen, *A Pattern for Joint Operations*, 20–23.
56. Momoyer, "A Concept of Tactical Air Operations," 7–8.
57. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 6.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.

Chapter 3

Background on Gen O. P. Weyland

Weyland was the best damn general in the Air Corps.

—Gen George S. Patton

Throughout his career, Gen Otto Paul (O. P. or Opie) Weyland was a staunch advocate of tactical airpower. When he arrived in Korea as the vice commander of Far East Air Forces in 1950, Weyland brought tremendous experience and credibility to the air-ground operation. The general had literally spent an entire career dedicated to improving the effectiveness of tactical warfare. After graduating from Texas A&M University in 1923 with a degree in mechanical engineering, Weyland went to work for Western Electric in Chicago, Illinois. He began his career in military aviation by entering the United States Army Air Service as a reservist. Bitten by the flying bug while serving weekend duty with the reserves, Weyland traded in his reserve status for a regular Army commission and began flight training in 1924 at Kelly Field, Texas. Early on in his flying career, Weyland was said to have impressed his contemporaries as being “quiet, competent, and altogether without a flair for the dramatic.”¹

After completing flight training in 1925, Weyland was sent to his first duty assignment at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. As a member of the 12th Observation Squadron, he was indoctrinated to tactical airpower and acquired a knowledge and appreciation of air-ground operations. During this two-year tour, Weyland was a sponge for information. When he arrived at the unit, he discovered a group of World War I pilots who liked to fly airplanes but “didn’t care about anything and didn’t really know anything about the observation or reconnaissance business.”² Being a self-motivated second lieutenant and the junior officer in the squadron, Weyland was assigned most of the tactical jobs. As such, he would go on all battalion exercises and participate in all regimental, brigade, and division maneuvers. Spoken like a young lieutenant at the time, the general later remarked: “I became the only one who did tactical work, really.”³ In an interview conducted in 1974, Weyland reflected on those early days with the Army:

So I had a lot of fun at it and learned a hell of a lot about the ground forces. I got to know the ground forces forwards and backwards. I learned to determine how long a division would be, or what an artillery battery looked liked on the road, or when they were allegedly concealed and in firing position. I would adjust their artillery for them from the air, and I knew where the machine guns were supposed to be and why they were there and the fields of fire. And so I could pick them up, because I knew where they were supposed to be. And I'd find them.⁴

In 1927, Weyland went back to Kelly Field and served as an aviation instructor for a little over four years. In 1931, the young bachelor got married and was assigned to Luke Field, Hawaii, where he flew both observation and bombardment airplanes. Ironically, Weyland chose the Hawaii assignment over a more prestigious job offer in the Philippines because of the lure of working with the Army again.⁵ According to Weyland, although the Philippines was a popular place to go and Airmen supposedly had more fun there, the “tactical work was piddling.”⁶ In rather short time Weyland became the commander of the 4th Observation Squadron in Hawaii. As a 30-year-old married captain, he was a squadron commander and the “old man.” This was rather humorous to the young aviator. Once again, Weyland attempted to foster the working relationship between the aviator and ground soldier by participating in numerous ground maneuvers and coastal artillery live-fire exercises.⁷ After a return assignment to Kelly as an instructor pilot and the chief of the observation section in the mid-1930s, Weyland attended the Air Corps Tactical School at Maxwell Field, Alabama, in 1937. Undoubtedly, Weyland’s field experience with the ground soldier helped him to graduate number one in his class.⁸ In the 1974 personal interview, Weyland further discussed how his previous experience in the field contributed to his success in the academic environment.

I did get to know the Army forwards and backwards, which helped me later on going through various schools. It was no mystery to me, but it was to the average Air Corps or Air Service officer at Maxwell Field [Air Corps Tactical School] or Fort Leavenworth [Army Command and General Staff School]. Its ground organization tactics were pretty much of a mystery to them. It was not to me. . . . I knew their problems, and I knew they had rough problems; I knew and I lived with them. I lived with the 23d Infantry. . . . So I picked up a lot of information and knowledge and appreciation of what they have to do and what their problems were.⁹

Weyland followed up his year at the ACTS with another year of academics at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He graduated from the Army’s Command and General Staff School in 1939 and received his first of many staff assignments, serving as the assistant to the chief of the National Guard Bureau’s Aviation Division in Washington, D.C.¹⁰ When the war in Europe seemed imminent, Weyland confessed privately that he didn’t want to be stuck in Washington if there was going to be a war. Through some internal politicking by his close friend, Col Carl B. “Puffy” McDaniel (Sixth Air Force chief of staff) to Lt Gen Frank M. Andrews (commander of Panama Canal Air Force), Weyland was granted his wish in 1941 and was assigned to Panama as the commanding officer of the 16th Pursuit Group.¹¹ Although the future general was excited about a fighter command job in the war, his preconceived notion that the Panama Canal would be a lucrative target for the Germans never panned out. Typical of Weyland’s quiet persona and his sense of humor, he later remarked: “I was there, of course, when the war started and discovered that nobody was going to attack it, although I was defending it like mad.”¹²

Despite his reservations about the strategic importance of the Panama Canal, Weyland was more than happy to be commanding a fighter outfit. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel and finished his tour of duty in Central America as General Andrew's chief of staff. Once again, Weyland seized the opportunity and used his command position to educate Army leaders on the "benefits of centralizing limited air resources in support of ground forces scattered over a large geographic area."¹³ This assignment proved to be a very tenuous time for the United States Army (USA) and the Army Air Forces (AAF) relationship as both entities struggled with the co-equal partnership concept. To their credit, Andrews and Weyland developed a Caribbean air force that would not be tied to any particular island commander. Instead, airpower would be centralized and "available for a concentrated blow for the defense of the canal."¹⁴

In March 1942, Weyland was promoted to colonel and sent back to Washington, D.C. He initially was assigned as deputy director of air support at Headquarters Army Air Force and later served as the chief of the Allocations and Programs Division.¹⁵ In this capacity, Weyland had a significant role in formulating AAF war requirements and worked closely with Gen Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, the AAF commander.¹⁶ Weyland, who was frequently called by Arnold on the intercom, discussed their relationship: "I don't know why he picked on me. My shop just damn near dealt with everything across the board. Anyway, I was kind of one of his favorite whipping boys, I guess."¹⁷ Rewarded for a job well done, Weyland was advanced to brigadier general in September 1943 and departed for Europe in November as commanding general of the 84th Fighter Wing. Weyland expressed satisfaction at the new command opportunity: "I was sitting there, and I was in the business of deploying units, putting them together, checking on their combat capability and whatnot, and passing final judgment on whether they were ready to go to war and whether they had the equipment—and so on, and then off they would go according to what the program was. Well, the program was kind of getting toward the end. I had been in the fighter business, and before that, the tactical business. So hell, I wanted to get in on this before all of the slots were taken up."¹⁸

Within four short months of arriving in the European theater, the new general was assigned as the command general of the XIX Tactical Air Command.¹⁹ It would be this assignment as Gen George S. Patton's air component commander that would solidify Weyland's reputation as a tactical airpower expert. One can imagine that Weyland went into his next assignment with a great deal of doubt regarding the prospect of working with Patton. Earlier in the war, Patton had strongly criticized air support operations in North Africa. Weyland described his thoughts at the time: "I just don't know that I was reluctant, but nobody was just real anxious to do it. . . . It was all right with me except I sort of felt that maybe I would have some tough times ahead. . . . Nobody was real envious of me; let's put it that way."²⁰ Undoubtedly, Weyland was concerned about the potential confrontations he would have with his superior Army officer over the em-

BACKGROUND ON GEN O. P. WEYLAND

ployment of airpower.²¹ Over time, however, Patton began to appreciate the true value of airpower. According to Weyland, “He [Patton] finally decided that there was just nothing like air power. He felt that there was nothing old Weyland and XIX TAC couldn’t do.”²²



Generals George S. Patton Jr. and O. P. Weyland (Reprinted from Maj Bradford J. Shwedo, *XIX Tactical Air Command and ULTRA* [Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press]: 12.)

Col James Ferguson, Weyland’s operations officer in the XIX TAC, described his boss as soft-spoken, but very firm and capable.²³ According to Ferguson, Weyland went out of his way before the Normandy invasion to ensure that the “two commanders understood each other and the capabilities and limitation of their forces. Such good rapport was established early on about what one could and could not do that there were no serious difficulties.”²⁴ While Weyland, a one-star general, did not achieve the co-equal commander status envisioned in FM 100-20, *Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict*, he did have the three-star general Patton’s confidence from the beginning.²⁵ In *Air Power for Patton’s Army, The XIX Tactical Air Command in the Second World War*, historian David N. Spires summarized Weyland’s role in the Third Army-XIX TAC partnership: “Weyland brought to the partnership a military background in tactical operations that

would prove excellent preparation for the air-ground mission that both would face. Though without combat experience, he had spent his entire career in tactical aviation, and he understood air-ground requirements better than most did in the AAF. He also brought to the XIX TAC extensive experience in fighter operational units, a thorough knowledge of tactical air operations, and a willingness to cooperate in fixing air-ground objectives. Moreover, his subdued, more taciturn personality complemented Patton's flamboyancy.”²⁶

In the AAF chain of command, the XIX TAC and the IX TAC were both subordinate commands to the IX Fighter Command. General Quesada, who arrived in-theater as part of the Ninth Air Force contingent from the Middle East, was both the commander of IX Fighter Command and IX TAC. Quesada’s IX TAC eventually would provide air support to the First Army.²⁷ The First Army, led by Gen Omar Bradley and later Gen Courtney Hodges, operated on the “Third Army’s left flank in the drive across France.”²⁸ Like Weyland, Quesada was a graduate of the ACTS and the Army’s Command and General Staff School. Fresh from his tactical air-power success in North Africa, Quesada brought with him a wealth of “tactical experience, an appreciation for technical innovation, and tremendous energy and drive.”²⁹ However, unlike Weyland, Quesada had an “impulsive personality.”³⁰ Besides a difference in combat experience, Weyland and Quesada also contrasted with respect to personality and leadership style. With their similar personalities, Generals Patton and Quesada would have found it difficult to form an effective air-ground partnership. According to Spires, Army and Air Force leaders must have realized that two “headstrong personalities” on the same team was a recipe for disaster. As with Patton, the soft-spoken Weyland acted as a perfect ally to Quesada. Spires notes that “by pairing Weyland and Quesada, these complementary personalities were able to contribute to teamwork at IX Fighter Command. Both brought to their commands extensive tactical experience, a willingness to innovate, a commitment to air-ground objectives, and the drive to make the cooperative effort successful.”³¹

At the end of the war, Weyland, now a major general, was sent back to the states and was assigned to the Army Command and General Staff School as the assistant commandant.³² Before his death in December 1945, General Patton sent Weyland a partial copy of his manuscript, *War As I Knew It*. Possibly sensing Weyland’s disappointment at not getting an operational command after their success in France, Patton offered encouragement and the following compliment: “As you know, I told General Eisenhower during the campaign that I would be perfectly happy to have you as a Corps Commander, at any time.”³³

Weyland stayed in Kansas for a short nine months before being called back to Washington as the assistant chief of plans at Headquarters Army Air Force. Shortly before the Air Force became a separate service in 1947, Weyland moved up to become the chief of plans and operations.³⁴ From February 1948 to July 1950, he served as deputy commandant of the Na-

tional War College in Washington, D. C. While still assigned to the war college in June 1950, Gen Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Air Force chief of staff, sent Weyland on a fact-finding mission to report on conditions in Korea. With the war only a week old, Weyland reported back to Vandenberg with some rather distressing news: "I said to Van, you'd better get the hell over there. This is more serious than I think you realize. We cannot look too good. The only reason we look as good as we do is that we are better than the Army or the Navy. Better off, with a little better experience, and we seem to know a little more about it. I think you should go over and take Joe Collins [Gen J. Lawton Collins, USA], if you can with you. . . . It would be a good idea if the two of you were over there."³⁵

After returning from his very short trip to Korea, Weyland proceeded to Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, where he was supposed to take charge of TAC on 1 July.³⁶ When Vandenberg returned from his site survey of Korea, he notified Weyland of his new duty assignment as the vice commander of operations for FEAf. Weyland's pointed response was: "What in the hell is a vice commander for operations?"³⁷ He later commented that his command of TAC was quite possibly the shortest in history.³⁸ However, he was about to become heavily involved in the Korean War and quite possibly face his greatest leadership challenge as a general officer in the Air Force.

Notes

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2. Gen O. P. Weyland, interview by Dr. James C. Hasdorff and Brig Gen Noel F. Parrish, 19 November 1974, 18, copy of transcript acquired from Dr. David R. Mets. Transcript is also located in General Weyland's personal files at USAF Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL.
3. Ibid., 19.
4. Ibid., 20–21.
5. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 26.
6. Weyland, interview, 26.
7. Ibid., 29.
8. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 26.
9. Weyland, interview, 22–23.
10. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 26.
11. Weyland, interview, 47.
12. Ibid.
13. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 27.
14. Mayock, "Notes on the Development of AAF Tactical Air Doctrine," 187.
15. "General Otto Paul Weyland," *Air Force Official Biography* [United States Air Force], n.p., 11 November 2002, http://www.af.mil/news/biographies/weyland_op.html.
16. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 26.
17. Weyland, interview, 56.
18. Ibid., 138–39.
19. Weyland official biography.
20. Weyland, interview, 140.
21. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 27.
22. Weyland, interview, 140.
23. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 27.
24. Ibid., 310.

25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 27.
27. Ibid., 33–34.
28. Ibid., 34.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Weyland official biography.
33. Spires, *Air Power for Patton's Army*, 311–12.
34. Weyland official biography.
35. Weyland, interview, 188.
36. Weyland official biography.
37. Weyland, interview, 189.
38. Ibid.

Chapter 4

Close Air Support in Korea

The Controversy

Had it not been for the Far Eastern Air Force, there would not be an American in Korea today.

—Lt Gen Walton H. Walker, 13 July 1950

The record in Korea shows USAF in the remarkable position of having absolute air superiority, but unable to give its own troops adequate support.

—Newspaper Item, 13 July 1950

The contribution of the Far East Air Force in the Korean conflict has been magnificent. They have performed their mission beyond all expectations.

—Gen Douglas MacArthur, 25 July 1950

Failure to plan for close support of ground forces has been a chronic complaint against Air Force leaders. It took too long . . . for the Air Force . . . to find the right enemy targets.

—A Military Analyst, 31 July 1950

There has never been anything like this in my experience. Without air support we simply would have been pushed into the water.

—Maj Gen Hobart Gay, USA, 11 August 1950

The campaign has demonstrated that full control of the air is no path to quick, cheap victory and also has showed the Air Force is far behind the Marine Corps in ground-air teamwork.

—News Item, 3 October 1950

The fundamental lesson of Korea is the need for balanced forces.

—Newsletter, 15 October 1950

The Korean War clearly shows the Air Force was unable to fill the Army's need for air support.

—News Item, 31 October 1950

As a member of a division which fought through encirclement . . . it is my very definite opinion that had it not been for the closest cooperation and all out help given us by your close support we would not have gotten through that block.

—Brig Gen Sladen S. Bradley, USA, 9 January 1951

When the North Korean Army moved south across the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950, neither the United States Air Force nor the Army was prepared to fight a war on the peninsula.¹ Due to the rapid demobilization of forces after World War II, the US military machine was a mere shell of its former self. Based on the success of strategic bombing in World War II and the development of the atomic bomb, Americans, including the government and the military, had convinced themselves that the atomic bomb was the “sovereign remedy for all military ailments.”² In fact, Americans began to think of war in terms of annihilative victories and disregarded the occasional warning of limited war that occurred in far away places. As such, it was difficult for the United States to envision a Communist military action short of World War III. So when North Korean troops did invade South Korea, it was a “strategic surprise in the deepest sense.”³ With a depleted military already stretched thin around the world and having focused limited budgetary resources for strategic bombing capability, the Air Force and its Strategic Air Command were the “only American military organization possessing a formidable instant readiness capacity.”⁴

US Military Action

The Truman administration was faced with a difficult situation, for “the United States had not intended to fight in Korea, nor had it planned to wage the type of warfare fought there.”⁵ However, without some type of military response, the possibility of losing South Korea to Communism was real. Bevin Alexander cautions that “if the Communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without the opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggression by stronger communist neighbors.”⁶ Moreover, many US government leaders viewed the threat in Korea as an undisguised challenge to the security of American-occupied Japan. Unfortunately, taking a stand against Communist aggression was only half of the solution; the second, and most important half, was to determine what to do.

On 25 June, Pres. Harry S. Truman authorized FEAF to evacuate all American nationals and to fly escort missions. On the 27th, air forces were allowed to attack ground targets south of the 38th parallel. Finally, on 29 June, Truman with the support of United Nations’ resolutions condemning the North Korean invasion, gave the green light for air attacks on targets north of the 38th parallel.⁷ Although allowing air attacks into North Korea was significant, Gen Douglas MacArthur continued to press for the deployment of American ground troops to the peninsula. After visiting a

frontline position near Suwon (South Korea) on 29 June, MacArthur expressed concern over the porous ground situation in a message sent back to the joint chiefs in Washington.

The South Korean army was down to not more than 25,000 effective soldiers. It was in confusion, had not seriously fought, and lacked leadership. A lightly armed force in the beginning, the ROK Army had made no plans for defense in depth and had lost many of its supplies and heavier equipment during its retreat. Now, at best, the South Koreans could only hope to fight behind natural barriers and to retard the North Korean advance. . . . Unless provision is made for full utilization of the Army-Navy-Air team in this shattered area, our mission will at best be needlessly costly in life, money, and prestige. At worst, it might even be doomed to failure.⁸

MacArthur's wish for a joint military effort to defend the Republic of Korea was granted one day later when Truman authorized the far east commander to "employ in Korea such Army forces as he had available, subject only to the requirements for the safety of Japan."⁹ In addition, he was directed to establish a naval blockade of North Korea. Thus, as requested, President Truman authorized the "full utilization of the Army-Navy-Air team."¹⁰

Phases of the Air War

The air war in Korea was essentially divided into three distinct phases. The first phase started with the North Korean invasion on 25 June and lasted until late November 1950, as United Nations Command (UNC) forces pushed the North Koreans back to the Yalu River. The start of the second phase began on 26 November 1950, as Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) launched a counteroffensive that pushed UNC ground forces south to the 38th parallel. By the beginning of July 1951, movement and fighting on the ground had stagnated, and armistice negotiations began to unfold, marking the start of the third phase that lasted for approximately two years and ended with the signing of the armistice on 27 July 1953.¹¹

While CAS played an important role throughout the entire Korean War, it made its greatest impact during the first two phases. For example, during the first 75 days of the war, CAS "consumed two-thirds of the total sortie capability of the Far East Air Forces."¹² Two factors contributed to this high number. First, the USAF was able to achieve air superiority within the first few days of the operation and was able to maintain it throughout the war. Therefore, by default, the Air Force had the capability to devote a large number of sorties for air-ground support. A second factor was the realization by Air Force leadership that without committing a large number of tactical assets to the rapidly deteriorating ground situation, Army forces would not be able to remain on the peninsula. It was not a stretch of the imagination to label the initial military strategy in Korea as survival. Ground forces were thrown into battle under some difficult conditions and without the necessary firepower. Moreover, in contrast to the successful tactical air campaigns of World War II, ground forces in the Korean War did not reap the benefits of a sustained interdiction campaign to isolate the

battlefield. The artillery shortage put an additional burden on both services. One observer noted that “targets that would normally have been handled by ground weapons were assigned for air strikes, a factor which increased the quantity of strike requests and often put air attack on inappropriate targets.”¹³ Susan Mercer Williams and Frank J. Mirande argue that “it is doubtful that the United Nations Command (UNC) could have survived the initial North Korean onslaught without the CAS provided by the U.S. Air Force. . . . The air effort had to be committed to reinforce the hard-pressed ground forces. Close support by air had to make up for a lack in Army organic support fire. This use of air enabled the combined ground forces to trade space for time and prevented the North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) from accomplishing its mission.”¹⁴

Despite the disappointing withdrawal and defensive struggle on the ground, air forces were able to capitalize on the tactical situation. As the North Koreans discovered, airpower can have its most devastating effects on a ground force when supply lines are expanded. In this scenario, as the North Korean line of communications became increasingly exposed on open roads and bottlenecks formed at various chokepoints, airpower was able to inflict an incredible amount of damage.¹⁵ An attack on 10 July 1950 illustrated this important airpower lesson. A North Korean armor column was caught “bumper to bumper at a bombed-out bridge near Pyongtaek. The ensuing air attack cost the enemy 117 trucks, 38 tanks, and seven halftracks.”¹⁶ The defensive perimeter around Pusan was established on 31 July 1950. Despite numerous attempts to break through, UNC forces were able to maintain their defensive position. Throughout August and the first half of September, the USAF continued to devote the majority of its air effort towards CAS. Nonetheless, the interdiction missions that were flown had a substantial effect on the NKPA’s ability to sustain an attack on the perimeter. In a little over a month, North Korean resupply had fallen from a 206-ton average per day in mid-July to 51 tons a day in mid-August, and to a mere 21.5 tons during the UNC defense of the Pusan perimeter.¹⁷ Unquestionably, the tenacious effort of UNC troops on the ground, combined with the tactical airpower of the Air Force, Navy, and Marines saved the city of Pusan and the eventual independence of South Korea. In his book, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu*, Army historian Roy E. Appleman maintains that “the Far East Air Forces probably exercised greater relative influence in August 1950 in determining the outcome of the Korean battles than in any other month of the war.”¹⁸

On 15 September, an amphibious landing was planned behind North Korean forces at the western port of Inchon. Nearly simultaneous with the Inchon landing, Lt Gen Walton H. Walker began a counteroffensive out of Pusan. In conjunction with X Corp’s success at Inchon and Eighth Army’s successful drive to the north, both units linked up “south of Seoul on September 26 [sic] 1950.”¹⁹ On the heels of their successful offensive and President Truman’s decision to reunify Korea, United Nations (UN) forces chased the North Koreans to the Yalu River. FEAF continued their CAS

and interdiction campaigns, but with a new slant. According to Robert Frank Futrell, the official Air Force historian of the war, previous "attacks sought to prevent resupply and reinforcement of the Communist armies in the field. Now the interdiction attacks sought both to hamper the enemy's movement toward Seoul and to prevent his escape from the noose which was being drawn in southern Korea."²⁰ As the UN forces marched northward, they met only "sporadic and weak resistance by air-battered NKPA units, which at no time in their rapid retreat were able to organize a solid coordinated front."²¹ A special issue of *Air Force Magazine* in 1951 called the twin ground offensives and the march to the Yalu a "joint success" for air-ground operations: "The major elements of the North Korean army dissolved in space; and the remnants, fleeing toward the 38th Parallel, were pounded to bits by relentless ground and air attack—a classic example of the 'exploration phase' of a joint air-ground offensive."²²

The statistics for the first four months of the war were also quite impressive:

- 39,000 enemy military personnel killed by air attack, which represents about one-third of the original 10 divisions that attacked on 25 June 1950. This figure is derived from only those attacks in which direct air or ground observations could be made; thus, results from bomber and night attacks are not included.
- 452 tanks destroyed, or 76 percent of the total destroyed by all forces for the 4-month period.²³

When the UN forces arrived at the Yalu, "the North Korean military forces had been defeated, and the country conquered. But a new war with a new enemy was about to begin."²⁴ CAS operations decreased in the last half of September and through most of November as the UN ground forces held position near the Yalu River. However, on the other side, the CCF were massing and preparing to launch their counteroffensive into Korea. On 26 November 1950, with a "total estimated strength of more than 250,000, and the potential of further reinforcements," the CCF crossed the Yalu and attacked south.²⁵ The second phase of the war had begun. Although China had committed forces into North Korea as early as October 1950, air strikes against the mass buildup in China were not possible because the air force was not permitted to cross the Yalu into China or Russia.²⁶ FEAF faced an interdiction problem that was unprecedented in air warfare. As UN troops moved into North Korea, FEAF's area of operation was gradually squeezed out because of the artificial bombing restriction.²⁷ Ironically, a few weeks earlier, General MacArthur and his staff felt that perhaps only 12,000 volunteers were fighting in North Korea and that China would not become involved in the war.²⁸

In *The Dragon Strikes: China and the Korean War, June–December 1950*, Patrick C. Roe concludes that the disaster at the Yalu was both an American intel-

ligence failure and a masterful deception plan by the Chinese. When MacArthur based his decision to press north on the estimate of 12,000 Chinese soldiers in country, he played right into the Chinese plan. In fact, Roe theorizes that "the Chinese had secretly deployed a 380,000-man army into Korea and had few forces left in Manchuria."²⁹ Nonetheless, CAS missions once again took on added importance as the UN forces were overwhelmed and forced to retreat. For the next two months, military strategy paralleled the first two months of the war when UN ground forces were in a struggle for survival. Fighter-bombers, medium bombers, and light bombers flew day and night against Chinese personnel and equipment. In the words of Dr. Kenneth R. Whiting, "The ground forces needed every bit of help that the airmen could provide to avoid being pushed right off the peninsula."³⁰ By mid-January UN forces had stiffened their retreat near the 38th parallel. Over the next few months, the line of demarcation ebbed and flowed in both directions. During this phase of the war, as in the beginning, CAS from all services was a godsend.

In one such case, General Walker's 2d Infantry Division had several units trapped by the enemy. The division commander, "seeing that his command was in danger of being annihilated," called in desperation for CAS. Fifth Air Force responded by providing support from dawn to dusk in hope of saving the forces on the ground. The division commander later recalled the unbelievable support provided by these pilots: "Some pilots flew so low during their runs that the soldiers thought the aircraft would hit the ground. These attacks were so close to the GIs that shards of rock dislodged by bombs and machine gun fire pelted the soldiers, who could also feel the heat of the napalm tanks as they exploded."³¹ Despite a rather inauspicious beginning, air-ground support had reached a new level. The assistant commander of the 2d Infantry Division penned the following letter of appreciation to Gen George E. Stratemeyer:

It is my very definite opinion that had it not been for the closest cooperation and all-out help given us by your close air support we would not have gotten through that block in any order at all. Never before have I had metallic links from MG [machine gun] fire drop on my head, nor have I seen napalm splash on the road. The support was that close. . . . I can't be too loud in my praise for your boys who flew over us as darkness approached. I don't mean twilight—I mean darkness. As an example, I recall that just before dark one of your TACP [tactical air control party] boys . . . came to me and asked what he could do. I stopped my jeep in order to get a break in the bumper to bumper column and asked the lad to find out if the Mosquito plane could see a 200-yard gap in the column where the road crossed the rail-road track. The answer from the plane was "Roger." I then asked him to plaster the hill due east of the gap. Within four minutes four fighters barreled in all they had and we were able to move again. Please convey to your "little fellers" my deepest appreciation.³²

The success Chinese forces achieved during the second phase of the war came at a high cost. As in the beginning, scenarios with a lot of ground movement presented ample opportunity for air forces to achieve tremendous results, especially with total air superiority. Once again, the statistics tell an important part of the story. During the second phase of the

war—from November 1950 to June 1951—airpower caused 117,000 enemy deaths, destroyed 1,315 gun positions, 296 tanks and over 80,000 structures used as troop and supply shelters; and crippled enemy transportation by destroying over 13,000 vehicles, 2,600 freight cars, and 250 locomotives. More importantly, by forcing the enemy to resupply at night, airpower forestalled any possibility of the Chinese building up sufficient strength to push UN forces south of the 38th parallel.³³

The third phase of the war began in July 1951 and could be characterized by two years of siege warfare. When it became clear to both participants that reunification of the peninsula would come at an extremely high cost, both sides seemed to adopt the same military objective—“accomplishment of an armistice on favorable terms.”³⁴ While the Air Force continued to fly CAS missions, attacks became increasingly more difficult and dangerous due to the static front and the enemy’s dug-in positions along the 38th parallel.³⁵ In many ways, the “war resembled operations along the Western Front in France, 1915–1917. Both armies took to the earth, erecting mazes of trenches, bunkers, barbed-wire systems, minefields, and crew-served weapons positions. The Communists dug deeper and bigger fortifications, driven in part by their fear of air attacks.”³⁶

Due to these unique battlefield conditions, a large portion of the airpower effort was shifted to the interdiction of enemy logistics. By interdicting enemy supplies and equipment, the Air Force sought to “deny the enemy the capability to launch and sustain a general offensive.”³⁷ In addition, this so-called air pressure strategy was intended to punish the enemy to the maximum extent possible and to “exact the greatest possible toll of enemy materiel and human resources.”³⁸ Thus, attacks on strategic targets within Korea became more important than ever.³⁹ Unfortunately, “ground forces had gotten used to having air support virtually on-call, and they were not pleased when the airmen began to seek more lucrative targets farther behind the lines.”⁴⁰ William T. Y’Blood discussed the ill feelings that ground soldiers developed because of this change in mission as they resonated in the words of a disgruntled regimental commander: “If you want it, you can’t get it. If you can get it, it can’t find you. If it can find you, it can’t identify the target. If it can identify the target, it can’t hit it. But if it does hit that target, it doesn’t do a great deal of damage anyway.”⁴¹

Although the role of CAS diminished somewhat during phase three, support of ground forces remained a priority for the Air Force throughout the war. For example, as late as July 1953, CAS sorties constituted greater than 50 percent of the total FEAF sorties for that month. The Air Force perspective was that “FEAF and the Fifth Air Force leaned over backward to provide more than adequate close air support when ground forces became actively engaged, and at other times maintained a rather high level of effort on close support in order to maintain the air-ground teamwork.”⁴² In contrast, the Army had a different perspective. The cooperative spirit that was fostered by successful CAS operations during the early portions of the conflict quickly degenerated into ill feelings that “festered throughout the remainder of the war.”⁴³

The Effectiveness of Close Air Support

Undoubtedly, CAS played an important role during the Korean War. However, as evidenced by the epigraphs at the beginning of this chapter, CAS operations were controversial. Despite the success of FEAf in preventing UN ground forces from being pushed off the peninsula, Air Force CAS rarely seemed to satisfy the Army's expectations of the mission. According to Allan R. Millett, contributing author in Benjamin Cooling's *Case Studies in the Development of Close Air Support*, "Air operations over the embattled peninsula had all the characteristics of a classic American early war effort. Coordination between the services was minimal; roles and missions became indistinct and overlapping; the lack of preparedness for war ensured confusion, frustration, and inefficiency."⁴⁴ Two factors need to be discussed when assessing the overall effectiveness of air-ground operations to which Millett alludes.

The first factor was military readiness. The Air Force was forced to react to a "contingency for which there had been no serious preparation."⁴⁵ Instead of flexing its strategic muscle and employing a massive bomber-launched nuclear attack against Mother Russia, the Air Force was called upon to execute a mission, for which it had not been armed or trained.⁴⁶ Second, the Air Force was trying to fight a war with a tactical force that had been neglected since the end of World War II. For the Air Force, two factors limited its effectiveness in the early stages of the war. The first one was equipment.

The primary role of aircraft stationed in Japan was air defense; the primary aircraft was the F-80 *Shooting Star*. While adequate for the interceptor role, the F-80 was not considered a good platform for air-to-ground operations. The F-80, the oldest operational jet in service for the Air Force, did not have pylon bomb racks and could carry only high-velocity aircraft rockets (HVAR) or 100- or 260-pound bombs on its rocket rails.⁴⁷ Y'Blood believes that "although the HVARs could be devastating, FEAf pilots had little practice in their use."⁴⁸ In fact, because of budgetary considerations, pilots trained with a completely different type of rocket and received their training with the HVAR in combat.⁴⁹ The F-80 was also limited in range and loiter time. The jet's increased airspeed and fuel consumption at low altitude meant that it could only remain on-station in Korea for around 30 minutes.⁵⁰ Fifth Air Force tried to extend the range and loiter time by installing wing fuel tanks. However, while the added fuel load helped with time over the target area, it further reduced an already ordnance-limited platform. Moreover, the F-80 could not be forward deployed and operate out of primitive air strips in Korea, "since it depended on well-constructed fields and a developed base system."⁵¹ Therefore, to take advantage of those unimproved runways in Korea and to find a platform that could improve their "ordnance-carrying capability," the United States Air Force decided to switch gears early on and transition back to the F-51.

The second limitation for the Air Force was a lack of training. Although Air Force assets were assigned a secondary mission of ground support, the Air Force had practically no experience in air-to-ground operations. Be-

cause of the decreased military budget, joint training exercises with Army and Navy units were few and far between. Y'Blood describes the air-ground training accomplished by FEAf in the year before Korea: "FEAF aircraft flew 350 antiaircraft artillery (AAA) tracking missions but only 14 CAS missions, of which 6 were simulated strafing attacks against ground forces and 3 were ground-controlled."⁵² To further complicate training matters, FEAf also "lacked the basic resources to fight even a limited war in Korea."⁵³ For example, writes Callum A. MacDonald, "There was a shortage of bombs, maps and target intelligence."⁵⁴ Because of the "pickup" nature of the entire operation, "everything had to be hastily improvised."⁵⁵ As such, when Airmen were asked to perform in a situation where they lacked training and resources, mistakes were inevitable. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the CAS mission, mistakes usually resulted in the loss of life. For example, during the first encounters of the war, inexperienced air-ground pilots tended to attack indiscriminately on the front lines. In one case, "American pilots attacked a column of thirty ROK (Republic of Korea) trucks, killing two hundred South Korean troops. An American officer working with an ROK unit said he was attacked by friendly aircraft five times in one day."⁵⁶ CAS is a demanding mission that requires a great deal of training and coordination between air and ground forces.

On the Army side, readiness for a war in Korea was also at an all-time low. Although the four divisions that MacArthur possessed looked good on paper, the reality was that they were merely an occupational force for the defense of Japan. For starters, the "troops lacked knowledge of basic infantry skills."⁵⁷ Besides being deficient in strength with only two battalions instead of three to a regiment, the units had conducted no live-firing exercises or large-scale maneuvers.⁵⁸ MacDonald explains that many of the troops stationed in Japan "were more familiar with the beer halls and brothels of the Japanese cities than with the basics of soldiering."⁵⁹ In *Korea: The War Before Vietnam*, he characterizes MacArthur's force as being a "cream puff army." In the words of one critic, "If these guys had spent more time on the firing range and less time in the PX snack bar. . . .they might be alive today."⁶⁰

Undoubtedly, Army leadership does not deserve all of the blame for this state of readiness. Like other military forces in the Pacific, budget constraints and the Soviet threat in Europe left the Army with a severely depleted force. According to MacDonald, personnel sent to the Far East were in many cases castoffs and were not wanted elsewhere. He further explains: "Under prevailing strategic priorities, the best troops were retained in the US or sent to Europe."⁶¹ Arthur T. Hadley, a captain in the US Army during World War II and later a noted author, was another outspoken critic who gave the Army less-than-favorable marks at the start of the war.

At the war's beginning, 43 percent of the ground troops in the Far East tested in the lowest two categories on the Army intelligence tests; those at the bottom being just marginally able to read and write. They had been living the soft life in Japan, often with servants, and no large-scale training exercises had been held. The ablest of the Army's soldiers were back in the United States in the airborne units that formed

the United States Strategic Reserves. These Strategic Reserve units were stripped of their skilled personnel, who were rushed to Korea; but in the meantime much deadly damage had been done. With untested officers, with weapons they had never fired, with radios that would not work, without promised air support, manned by the least intelligent, the least trained, and the least motivated, certain Army units simply fell apart. America's early battles were disasters.⁶²

In addition to manning and training problems, the lack of Army equipment also was a liability in the early days of the war. For example, when the war began, Far East Command had only three serviceable tanks ready to deploy.⁶³ In addition, artillery—especially heavy artillery—was very limited. The four infantry divisions stationed in Japan were short nine organic 105 mm howitzer batteries. Moreover, the 39 existing batteries (some 200 guns) had only “60 percent of their personnel and could only be rated 40 percent combat effective.”⁶⁴ Noted military historian Max Hastings states that MacArthur’s army forces “lacked 62 percent of their infantry firepower and 14 percent of their tanks.”⁶⁵ This shortage in ground firepower would prove significant, as it required the Army to demand additional air support of ground operations during the early portion of the war. Gen Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Air Force chief of staff during the Korean War, summarized the military readiness problem as it related to CAS operations: “Tactical air support was inadequate during the early days of the fighting in Korea, for the identical reason that there were not enough soldiers, Marines, tanks, and guns to stop the communists. America was not prepared to fight.”⁶⁶

The second factor that influenced the effectiveness of air-ground operations was communication between the services. Ironically, one of the biggest communication obstacles to overcome was the command and control structure that General MacArthur utilized for the Far East Command (FEC) as a derivative of the blueprint being used for the occupation of Japan. Unfortunately, the command structure had some glaring deficiencies. The most notable was the absence of a joint service headquarters. Although MacArthur had been directed to establish a joint staff as early as 1946, he failed to implement this direction within his organization. Because of this failure, air components from the Air Force, Navy, and Marines had a difficult time coordinating and implementing air operations. Moreover, to further exacerbate the problem, all three air components were not under the direction of a single air component commander. Futrell asserts that had MacArthur developed a joint headquarters staff, coordination problems encountered throughout the war could have been minimized. In *The United States Air Force in Korea*, Futrell identifies the consequences of MacArthur’s decision.

The Korean War was the first conflict to test the unified military forces of the United States. Although the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had directed the Far East Command to provide itself with a joint command staff adequate to ensure that the joint commander was fully cognizant of the capabilities, limitations, and most effective utilization of all the forces under his command, the United Nations Command/Far East Command operated for the first two and one-half years of the Korean War without a joint headquarters. Practically all of the interservice problems, which arose during the Korean War, could be traced to

misunderstandings, which, in all likelihood, would never have arisen from the deliberations of a joint staff. In the absence of the joint headquarters staff, the full force of United Nations airpower was seldom effectively applied against hostile target systems in Korea.⁶⁷

Instead of developing a joint command structure that relied on expertise from all services, MacArthur's staff consisted primarily of Army personnel. Gen William M. Momoyer highlighted the problem with this structure in *Airpower in Three Wars*: "When a headquarters that is supposed to control multi-service forces is not structured with a balanced staff, inter-service problems tend to become magnified since there is inadequate consideration of at least one service's view at the outset."⁶⁸ In addition to being the unified theater headquarters (also called GHQ for General Headquarters), MacArthur's staff acted as the headquarters of the ground component command (GCC). Figure 1 shows the relationship within the FEC at the start of the war. Millett argues that "without any real air planning integration at the UNC level, the command of American aviation in the Far East followed service lines."⁶⁹ With good reason, the Air Force and Navy were concerned over General MacArthur's dual responsibility as both the commander of the FEC and commander of the GCC. In this relationship, air and naval components were essentially subordinate to the ground commander.⁷⁰

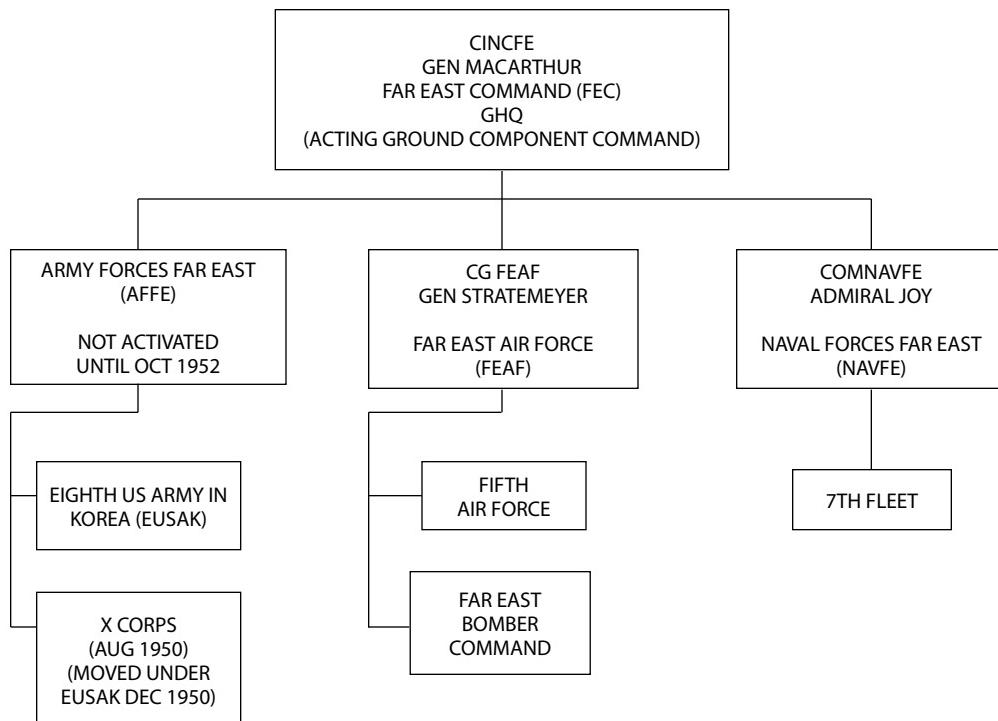


Figure 1. Unified Far East Command organization of forces in Korea (Reprinted from Maj Roger F. Kropf, "The US Air Force in Korea," *Airpower Journal* 4, no. 1 [Spring 1990]: 34.)

The command structure employed by MacArthur caused two problems with regard to CAS. The first one was that support could not be provided to the Army in a timely manner. MacArthur had directed that all Army requests for CAS be routed through his headquarters in Tokyo for approval instead of utilizing the Joint Operations Center (JOC), which Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force had established in Korea. As such, for the ground soldier awaiting air support, the lengthy process "entailed long and ponderous communications links from EUSAK [Eighth United States Army in Korea] to GHQ to FEAF and finally to Fifth Air Force."⁷¹ As a result, in the early phases of the war, the time required to forward, approve, and execute requests sometimes took up to four hours. To the ground commander in need of support, such delays were unsatisfactory, and a "major factor inhibiting prompt and effective air support."⁷²

In the case of No. 77 Squadron, an Australian P-51 unit flying in support of the United Nations, the lengthy delay between when the target was first reported and when the strike aircraft were assigned helped to contribute to a major fratricide incident. On its second day in-theater, No. 77 Squadron received word that a North Korean convoy was heading southwards towards a particular area.⁷³ Because the request for aid had to travel through MacArthur's GHQ in Tokyo, the information was several hours old by the time it reached the squadron. As a result, No. 77 Squadron had to estimate the location of the convoy. After finding the convoy and receiving clearance to attack from the forward air controller (FAC), the Australian squadron effectively destroyed a train and many of the vehicles that were positioned on the road. When the airplanes landed back in Japan, they learned that they had actually targeted trucks carrying South Korean soldiers and American troops. The subsequent investigation revealed that the long delay, caused by MacArthur's ineffective command system, did contribute to the accident. While the Ameri-cans accepted full blame for the tragic mishap, MacArthur changed his position on forwarding all requests to the GHQ and authorized direct contact within the JOC.⁷⁴

A second problem occurred in the area of targeting. "Instead of having FEAF, the air component command, perform air targeting, GHQ formed the GHQ Target Group and tried to direct air operations from Tokyo."⁷⁵ Unfortunately, the GHQ Army staff officers, who made up the target group, did not have the necessary experience and expertise to effectively target an air force. For example, Futrell states that 20 percent of the first 220 targets designated were nonexistent, such as the rail bridges at Yongwol and Machari—two towns without railroads at all.⁷⁶ In the beginning of the war, the target group effort by the GHQ was considered inadequate.⁷⁷ Eventually, the FEC activated a targeting committee utilizing senior-level USAF and US Navy personnel. This committee was formed with personnel from the Navy, Fifth Air Force, and the Far East Bomber Command. While they earned the reputation as targeting "experts," they "did not get full authority for air targeting until the summer of 1952, two years into the war."⁷⁸ The

overall effect of this targeting arrangement was the “failure to fully integrate air power into the theater campaign.”⁷⁹

Weyland Assigned to Korea

With the Korean War off to a very disappointing start, General Vandenberg could not have selected a better individual than Maj Gen O. P. Weyland to try and provide some stability to the air effort. When Vandenberg informed Weyland that he would leave his TAC commander position after one short week, he explained of the Korean job: “They don’t seem to have anybody who knows too much about tactical air operations.”⁸⁰ However, Weyland, the consummate professional, was somewhat concerned about taking over a position from someone and being forced upon Lt Gen George E. Stratemeyer, the current FEAF commander. Once again, Vandenberg’s response was short and concise: “He wants you.”⁸¹

Politically, Weyland had the best of both worlds. The Army respected him because of his World War II reputation as “Patton’s Airman.” The Air Force respected not only his tactical expertise, but also recognized his unwavering support of strategic airpower. According to Conrad C. Crane, author of *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950–1953*, Weyland was able to carry the “tactical torch” because politically he had a “foot in both camps.”⁸² In contrast, Crane felt that Quesada’s voice was ignored towards the end of his career because he preached nothing but the World War II lessons of tactical airpower and failed to identify with the momentum of strategic airpower in the air force. As the chief of plans and operations, Weyland helped to evolve the plan for the establishment of strategic air forces.⁸³ Gen Carl “Tooey” Spaatz “was the architect,” Weyland explained, “but I was the pick-and-shovel guy in my shop to draw up the plans that gave birth to the Strategic Air Command.”⁸⁴ Weyland, like many others, realized that the post-World War II budget predicament would not allow the air force to be strong in every facet of airpower. Although he was a tactical guy, he bought into the theory of strategic airpower because of the United States’ nuclear weapons capability. Yet, he was not without concern regarding tactical force structure in the United States. Weyland reasoned that the large North Atlantic Treaty Organization commitment in Europe, with what limited tactical forces the United States did have, left nothing back in reserve: “There was no seed corn. There was nobody for replacement or for a small war or anything. Of course, nobody believed in small wars then, except I was beginning to worry about it.”⁸⁵

In the early 1950s, because TAC was rundown and needed desperate help, Vandenberg handpicked Weyland for the commander job. However, when Vandenberg realized the desperate situation in Korea after his observation trip, Weyland was called upon to provide his tactical expertise in the Far East. During his tenure in Korea as first the vice commander of operations and later as the commander of the FEAF, Weyland soon came to realize that “no one would influence the course of the war over Korea more than he.”⁸⁶

After Weyland arrived in-theater, one of the first areas he influenced was the targeting process of FEC Headquarters. At the beginning of the war, General Vandenberg, to provide more strategic bombing capability, authorized the temporary assignment of two medium bombardment groups to the FEAF. Acting on his own initiative, Vandenberg felt that a robust interdiction and deep-strike capability was critical to the overall success of the air force.⁸⁷ In a message to Stratemeyer, Vandenberg explained that “it is axiomatic that tactical operations on the battlefield cannot be fully effective unless there is a simultaneous interdiction and destruction of sources behind the battlefield.”⁸⁸ On 8 July 1950, General Stratemeyer organized and activated the Far East Air Forces Bomber Command (Provisional) and named Maj Gen Emmett “Rosie” O’Donnell Jr. as its commander. When the Air Force attempted to employ its strategic assets against North Korean targets according to its doctrine, General MacArthur’s GHQ staff overruled. According to Maj Gen E. M. “Ned” Almond, MacArthur’s chief of staff, the deteriorating ground situation dictated that all available air assets be used to support the troops on the ground.⁸⁹

Although General Stratemeyer believed in loyalty to his commander, in this case General MacArthur, he was deeply troubled by two courses of events: that MacArthur’s staff, particularly General Almond, was instructing the FEAF on how to conduct air operations; and that the implication from the GHQ that FEAF had not been getting the job done in Korea.⁹⁰ On 10 July, General Stratemeyer, to rectify the targeting situation, sent a memo to MacArthur for clarification on how he wanted to employ the B-29 assets.

During the past war you had great confidence in General Kenney and then in General Whitehead who followed General Kenney. It is my desire to perform in the same manner and to gain the same confidence that you had in them. What the Far East Air Forces have done so far in 15 days, operating from bases in Japan and Okinawa, I consider outstanding. It is my opinion that had we not gone into action when we did in conjunction with the Ground Forces that you have been able to get into South Korea that the whole of South Korea would be in the hands of the North Koreans. Per your instructions given to me last night by the Chief of Staff, General Almond, I have changed the B-29 targets for today to tanks, vehicles and troops on the roads and railroads north of Ch’onan; this is to be done without control.⁹¹

Although Stratemeyer received assurances from MacArthur that the FEAF was to conduct operations as they saw fit, the reality of the ground situation and the broad authority of MacArthur’s GHQ target group prevented such action. Along with Stratemeyer, General O’Donnell had some concerns regarding the use of B-29s. One complaint was the Bomber Command constantly received short-notice changes to their missions. Another concern was that the B-29, a strategic airpower asset, was being entirely allocated to the CAS mission.⁹² To further complicate matters, MacArthur’s Far East Command GHQ target group was assigning targets to the bombers “based on an obsolete map of Korea and without Air Force representation.”⁹³ In an interview conducted in 1974, Weyland reasoned that this

targeting debacle was the reason Vandenberg sent him to Korea; it was shocking to say the least.

God, I was just utterly amazed and flabbergasted. It wasn't very smart. The things they were doing. They knew nothing about it, so the results were just what you would expect. They were pitiful and just confusing and not worthwhile, and so on. They would pick out a crossroad on a map, which was completely inaccurate, and would tell the B-29s to go bomb it. Well, they would probably go to bomb that crossroad, and maybe some of our troops would be there. The maps were so inaccurate. They didn't even know why they wanted to bomb it; they just thought crossroads ought to be bombed, I guess. They didn't know whether there was something there or not.⁹⁴

General Weyland was also critical of the interdiction effort being implemented by the GHQ.⁹⁵ Weyland expressed his observation and annoyance with this misuse of airpower: "There were all sorts of North Koreans streaming down from the North—unopposed, nothing to stop them. It was just not good employment of airpower. They were waiting until they got into contact, like trying to dam up a river at the bottom of a waterfall"⁹⁶ Weyland recommended the idea of a senior FEC target selection committee that would make all target recommendations to the commander, Far East. Thus, on 12 July General Stratemeyer, on the advice of Weyland, sent MacArthur a memorandum outlining the proposal for joint representation in the GHQ. The committee was to be comprised of Weyland; Maj Gen Doyle O. Hickey, deputy chief of staff of the FEC; Maj Gen C. A. Willoughby, assistant chief of staff for intelligence of the FEC; and a Navy representative to be designated by Adm C. Turner Joy, commander Naval Forces Far East.⁹⁷ One day later, MacArthur approved Stratemeyer's recommendation for the new committee.

Nonetheless, Weyland still was not satisfied with the joint process set up by the Army and felt that airpower effectiveness suffered because of it. Before the first meeting of the FEC target selection committee, Weyland sent a letter up to the FEC Headquarters outlining several criticisms of the GHQ target group. In the letter, Weyland began by stating that "the employment of air power was grossly abused . . . it just conflicted with every known piece of doctrine."⁹⁸ Weyland went on to highlight that the current Army-Air Force agreed-upon doctrine specifies that the air commander is supposed to have centralized control of tactical airpower. Weyland further stated that "The way things are going now, there is no relationship to anything that makes any sense whatsoever."⁹⁹ To finish the rather "pointed" memo, Weyland proposed two changes for MacArthur's staff, saying, "That the Far East Air Forces immediately take over complete command and control of the air power, including the selection of targets and everything else; and your headquarters—so that you will have some understanding—be organized as a joint headquarters with some of the key slots filled by Navy officers, field officers, and Air Force officers of senior grade so that you won't do these stupid things."¹⁰⁰

Subsequent to the letter, Weyland was immediately summoned to the Dai Ichi building (the FEC Headquarters in Tokyo) for a discussion with

General Almond.¹⁰¹ This meeting would prove to be the first of what would become many battles with General Almond over the employment of air-power in the Korean War. Surprisingly, General Stratemeyer did not know about the scathing memo. Weyland felt that Stratemeyer would have disapproved of his method of attack. According to Weyland, "Stratemeyer would have been shocked and he wouldn't have wanted this done. He didn't like to stir up trouble. He was such a nice guy. He was just a wonderful gentleman, and he didn't want to stir up trouble. Besides, all of his friends were over there."¹⁰² When Weyland arrived at the no-notice meeting with Almond and some other members of the GHQ staff, Almond was, in Weyland's words, "absolutely livid!"¹⁰³ He began berating Weyland and raising all kinds of hell about sending a memo like that directly to General MacArthur. General Weyland responded calmly that he didn't send it to MacArthur; he sent it to his staff. After more heated words from Almond, Weyland exclaimed: "General, don't speak to me in that manner, using those words or that tone of voice. You happen to be speaking to a superior officer, and I don't intend to have one more word like that. (Weyland out-ranked Almond as a major general in the Army) Just calm down and be reasonable. We can talk this over."¹⁰⁴ According to Futrell, "Weyland emphasized that the FEC Target Selection Committee had been established to work out the best employment of airpower on a mutually acceptable basis, a mission which would be impossible if all decisions were to be dictated from above."¹⁰⁵ Weyland concluded the meeting with a series of statements that further illustrated the clash between Airman and soldier with respect to understanding airpower: "I was sent over here. I am an expert in this business. That's the reason I am here. The Joint Chiefs apparently selected me on the advice of the chief of staff of the Air Force. I was told that the Joint Chiefs selected me for this job because I happened to have the know-how in this field. I don't think any one of you have that knowledge. You may be expert in artillery and this, that, and the other, and ground forces, but not in the air."¹⁰⁶

Obviously, the organization of MacArthur's staff was a big disappointment to Weyland. In contrast to the teamwork exhibited by XIX Tactical Air Command and US Third Army in World War II, MacArthur's staff did not have any joint representation from the Air Force or the Navy.¹⁰⁷ According to Weyland, this was the crux of the GHQ targeting group problem. As such, "the GHQ Target Group did not have sufficient experience or stature to perform the important duties which had been assigned to it."¹⁰⁸

Close-Air-Support “Controversy”

Although the lack of readiness within US forces and MacArthur's dysfunctional staff procedures reduced the effectiveness of airpower, both obstacles were temporary in nature. In contrast, the CAS controversy between the Air Force and Army was something that remained throughout the entire war. Three factors seemed to define the argument. The first was

the type of aircraft employed in CAS; the second was the type of air-ground system being utilized; and the third factor was the overall command and control of the air-ground mission.

During the Korean conflict, the Army was quick to praise such propeller-driven aircraft as the F-51 and to criticize the use of jets in CAS. In particular, a number of reports on the F-80 suggested that attacks against Korean armor were ineffective due to the airplane when in fact it was because of an inferior warhead on the rockets they were employing.¹⁰⁹ Another common misperception was that the jet was not suited for CAS because of its limited range and loiter time. While loiter time over the target was limited, this statement is somewhat shortsighted because it fails to consider the cause of the problem. Jets were limited in the target area because they had to operate out of bases in Japan. When the jets were equipped with large-capacity fuel tanks, the problem was minimized.¹¹⁰ When suitable landing fields were established in Korea, the problem disappeared. The range and endurance problem might have been overcome earlier had the Air Force replaced the F-80 with the more modern F-84E *Thunderjet*. In *Air War over Korea*, Robert Jackson observes that “this jet would have more than adequately fulfilled the Fifth Air Force’s ground attack requirements in Korea; the only thing that prevented its operational deployment in Japan was the inadequacy of the Japanese airfields themselves, only four of which had the 7,000-foot runways necessary for the safe operation of aircraft of this type.”¹¹¹

Because of the desperate situation on the ground, the Air Force needed a quick solution to the problem. The answer came in the form of the F-51. As of 1950, there were “764 of these aircraft in service with Air National Guard units, and a further 794 were in storage.”¹¹² Upon receipt of General Stratemeyer’s request, 145 F-51s were loaded up on the aircraft carrier USS *Boxer* and shipped to Korea.¹¹³ The Army praised the introduction of the F-51 into battle because it was familiar with the airplane’s performance in World War II.¹¹⁴ When compared to the jet, this airplane could loiter over the target for hours and the troops could easily see it attacking targets in front of them. On the other hand, pilots had a different reaction. Based on their experiences from the previous war, they had seen firsthand why the *Mustang* was not a “ground-support fighter . . . and weren’t exactly intrigued by the thought of playing guinea pig to prove the same thing over again.”¹¹⁵ Moreover, the Air Force learned that the jet had numerous advantages over the *Mustang*. Millett argues that “the jets proved they could provide twice the sorties of the F-51 per day, with only about half the maintenance time. Jets had a higher operational readiness rate and better parts availability. In combat, the jet’s speed reduced its vulnerability to ground fire. In 1950, Fifth Air Force *Mustang* losses to enemy action in relation to sorties flown were more than twice those of jets. . . . Additionally, the *Mustang*’s liquid-cooled engine was particularly vulnerable to ground fire.”¹¹⁶ This is not to say that the F-51s and such aircraft as the Marine-Navy F-4U *Corsair* were not impressive in their support of the air-ground mission in Korea. The F-51 served admirably until 23 January 1953, when it was finally withdrawn

from combat.¹¹⁷ General Weyland was always quick to remind the Army that the *Mustang* would not have been a possibility had the Air Force been unable to gain and maintain air superiority in-theater. More importantly, Weyland cautioned those who concluded that because the propeller-driven airplane achieved success in Korea, it should be the standard Air Force air-ground aircraft in future conflicts.¹¹⁸

The air-ground control system was another component of the CAS disagreement. The structure of the tactical air control system (TACS) was initially designated in FM 31-35. The system was further updated in September 1950, when Tactical Air Command published a *Joint Training Directive for Air-Ground Operations*. These two manuals dictated that the Air Force and Army establish a JOC to coordinate all air-ground operations.¹¹⁹ In theory, the JOC would serve as a common location for Air Force and Army commanders to exchange battle information. Army commanders would present their requirements for air support, and Air Force commanders would plan and control the supporting air effort. On paper TACS looked like an effective way to establish air support for the ground war. Unfortunately, at the outbreak of hostilities, "The tactical air control system was nonexistent. The equipment and personnel required for the system was not in place or available in-theater. The system had to be quickly developed and built from assets available."¹²⁰ The first step was to form a joint operations center. On 5 July 1950, a JOC was established and collocated with the 24th Division. However, because both the Air Force and the Army were slow to assign personnel to the JOC, the JOC went unfilled for approximately a week. The situation improved slightly when Eighth Army established a headquarters in Taegu.¹²¹

Like the rest of the control system, a tactical air control party (TACP) was not ready to participate at the start of the war. TACPs were assigned to provide final control. Generally, one TACP was assigned to the division, and the other three TACPs were used to support the regiments within the division. Being strictly an Air Force element, TACPs used Air Force equipment. Each TACP consisted of a ground FAC "who was a qualified fighter-bomber pilot, and two enlisted communications specialists."¹²² When an air mission was approved, the TACP talked directly to the aircraft overhead and was responsible for providing updates on enemy threats and on changes in the ground order of battle. Ultimately, the TACP was to assist aircraft in putting bombs on target. The Air Force eventually formed two TACPs and deployed them to Korea in July 1950 as more personnel were being trained.

Communications equipment was also a problem. Besides being old, the radios used by ground FACs were attached to jeeps and were not remote-capable. This was a twofold problem. First, the FACs were limited on the ground because the standard army jeep could not negotiate a lot of the difficult terrain in Korea. Second, because the FACs had to stay with the jeep to communicate, they were often exposed while trying to direct an air strike. To alleviate the communication problem and enhance the effectiveness of CAS, the Air Force made an important change in July 1950 by incorporating the airborne FAC. The airborne FACs, called "Mosquitos,"

helped request targets from the front lines, controlled air strikes on enemy targets, and provided valuable eyes for the ground commander.¹²³ Quite literally, the airborne FAC was the glue that held the tactical air control system together. By the end of 1950, Mosquitos had controlled over 90 percent of Air Force air-ground strikes, a rate that remained constant for the duration of the conflict. Although TACPs controlled only a small percentage of CAS missions, “the importance of the issues surrounding them to the debate over close air support was out of proportion to the actual conduct of air-ground operations.”¹²⁴

Because of problems encountered with the Army-Air Force control system, each service blamed the other for its deplorable situation. Moreover, comparisons began to occur between the Army-Air Force CAS system and the Marine-Navy system. The Marine philosophy on air-ground operations was developed and refined during amphibious operations during World War II. During these Pacific campaigns, Marine air units were tasked to provide direct air support to specific Marine ground units. There were several differences between the two air-ground systems. First, because the Marines were designed for the amphibious mission, they were “essentially light infantry and lacked adequate organic artillery and armor.”¹²⁵ Therefore, airpower acted as a suitable substitute for their artillery. A second difference was seen in training. According to Kropf, “In contrast to the pre-war relationship between FEAF and Eighth Army, Navy-Marine aviation trained extensively and realistically with the Marine ground units.”¹²⁶ Furthermore, because they are a unique and smaller organization when compared to the Army, air units could be paired with specific ground units in both training and combat. Another difference and advantage for the Marine system was the number of tactical air control parties they could field. Each battalion had a TACP assigned to its unit. This capability made a tremendous difference in the overall efficiency of the system. Because aviators in the TACP were able to request CAS missions directly from the front lines and because Marine aircraft typically responded from the aircraft carrier or forward airfield, CAS was usually on station within minutes.¹²⁷ Finally, there existed a fundamental difference between the services in how they defined the term *close* in close air support. To the Air Force, CAS was to be used against targets outside of artillery range. As such, except in extreme emergencies, Air Force strikes were usually made at a distance of greater than 1,000 yards from the front lines. The Marines, on the other hand, routinely conducted air support missions as close as 50 yards to the front lines.¹²⁸

The final factor that defined the CAS controversy was the overall command and control of the air-ground mission. Undoubtedly, this has been the crux of the argument over CAS since the introduction of the airplane as a weapon of war. Ground commanders wanted more airpower in support of the air-ground mission, while Air Force leaders wanted to concentrate on the full spectrum of air missions to include air superiority, interdiction, and strategic bombing. Col Donald W. Boose Jr., a retired Army officer and Vietnam veteran, reasons that “soldiers inevitably view air op-

erations as in support of the land mission. This has always produced a tension over the issue of close air support, which is the most direct and significant way in which air forces can support Army forces in pursuit of the Army's primary mission.¹²⁹ Booze continues to say that no matter how much the Army agrees with Air Force logic about the importance of centralized control of airpower, or the primacy of air superiority, the soldier's view of airpower is "I want it all, I want it now, and I want it in that tree line right over there."¹³⁰

A study of air-ground doctrine performed in 1958 by the Tactical Air Command accurately reveals the opposing views of the soldier and Airman with respect to the employment of airpower.

To the soldier in the field tactical airpower means one thing—close air support—the delivery of ordnance on the enemy confronting him. The fact that the tactical aircraft he sees is also used for other missions of equal, or sometimes greater, importance escapes his view and his immediate concern. What has not escaped his concern, however, is the fact that he does not directly control this aircraft.

The tactical airman, on the other hand, feels that his weapon system should be applied against all aspects of the enemy's war-waging capability that lie within his aircraft's range. Therefore, he attacks targets ranging from the enemy in the foxholes and his transportation facilities to his supply depots and rear bases of operations. He also realizes that he must destroy the enemy in the air and his capability to get into the air. In short, the airman views his battle as three dimensional, not just linear.¹³¹

While senior army officers may not "want it all, they invariably want control of timely and accurate close air support missions."¹³²

After the overwhelming success of tactical airpower in World War II, there was no immediate "controversy." Tactical airpower had developed arm in arm with ground forces and "its role in the war had been vitally important . . . its capabilities in 1945 were very impressive."¹³³ However, fewer than five years later, there were serious problems. General Weyland commented, "What was remembered from World War II was not written down, or if written down was not disseminated, or if disseminated was not read or understood."¹³⁴

Notes

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2. Weigley, *American Way of War*, 382.
3. Ibid., 383.
4. Ibid., 382.
5. Hadley, *Straw Giant*, 101.
6. Alexander, *Korea*, 33.
7. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 23–24.
8. Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea*, 36–37.
9. Ibid., 37.
10. Ibid.
11. Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 5–30; and Millett, "Korea," 394.

12. "Has the Air Force Done its Job in Korea?" 38.
13. Ibid.
14. Williams and Mirande, *When the Chips are Down*, 51.
15. Momoyer, *Airpower in Three Wars*, 167.
16. Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 9.
17. Futrell, "Tactical Employment of Strategic Air Power in Korea," 37; and Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 9.
18. Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 376.
19. Boose, "The Army View of Close Air Support in the Korean War," 16.
20. Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea*, 164.
21. Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 10.
22. "Has the Air Force Done its Job in Korea?" 38.
23. Williams and Mirande, *When the Chips are Down*, 51.
24. Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 12.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. "Has the Air Force Done its Job in Korea?" 38.
28. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 22.
29. Boose, USAF, retired, "Perspectives on the Korean War," 118.
30. Whiting, "Korean War," 54.
31. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 23.
32. Ibid.
33. Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 15.
34. Ibid., 20.
35. Boose, "Army View of Close Air Support in the Korean War," 28.
36. Millett, "Korea," 384.
37. Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 23.
38. Ibid., 24.
39. Boose, "Army View of Close Air Support in the Korean War," 28.
40. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 35.
41. Ibid.
42. Williams and Mirande, *When the Chips are Down*, 52.
43. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 35.
44. Millett, "Korea," 353.
45. Beaumont, *Joint Military Operations*, 137.
46. MacDonald, *Korea*, 232.
47. Millett, "Korea," 362; and Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 2.
48. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 2.
49. Ibid.
50. Millett, "Korea," 362.
51. Ibid.
52. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 1.
53. MacDonald, *Korea*, 227.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. MacDonald, *Korea*, 203.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Hadley, *Straw Giant*, 106.
63. MacDonald, *Korea*, 203.
64. Millett, "Korea," 358.

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65. Hastings, *Korean War*, 50.
66. "Has the Air Force Done its Job in Korea?" 35.
67. Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea*, 693.
68. Momyer, *Airpower in Three Wars*, 53.
69. Millett, "Korea," 358.
70. Kropf, "US Air Force in Korea," 31–33.
71. Ibid., 33.
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74. Ibid.
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76. Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea*, 52.
77. Momyer, *Airpower in Three Wars*, 54.
78. Kropf, "US Air Force in Korea," 33.
79. Ibid.
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82. Crane, Army historian, interview by the author, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, 5 March 2003.
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84. Ibid., 99.
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86. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 34.
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92. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 33.
93. Ibid.
94. Weyland, interview, 196–97.
95. Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea*, 52.
96. Weyland, interview, 202.
97. Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea*, 52.
98. Weyland, interview, 197–98.
99. Ibid., 198.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid., 197.
103. Ibid., 199.
104. Ibid.
105. Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea*, 54.
106. Weyland, interview, 200.
107. Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea*, 52.
108. Ibid., 52.
109. Dolan, "What's Right and Wrong with Close Air Support," *Combat Forces Journal*, July 1951, 29.
110. Ibid., 29; and Jackson, *Air War over Korea*, 24. Jackson states that loiter time increased from 15 minutes over the target to 45 minutes with the new wingtip fuel tanks.
111. Jackson, *Air War over Korea*?
112. Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 25.
113. Ibid.

114. Millett, "Korea," 363.
115. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 6.
116. Millett, "Korea," 363.
117. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 6.
118. Weyland, "Some Lessons of the Korean War and Conclusions and Recommendations Concerning USAF Tactical Air Responsibilities," n.p.
119. Millett, "Korea," 349–52.
120. Kasl, "Close Air Support Post World War I through the Korean War," 21.
121. Millett, "Korea," 364.
122. Kasl, "Close Air Support Post World War I through the Korean War," 19.
123. Millett, "Korea," 364–65.
124. *USAF Operations in the Korean Conflict*, 1 November 1950–30 June 1952, 188.
125. Kropf, "US Air Force in Korea," 36.
126. Ibid.
127. Boose, "Army View of Close Air Support in the Korean War," 8.
128. Ibid., 9.
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130. Ibid.
131. Dickens, *A Survey of Air-Ground Doctrine*, 1958, 32.
132. Boose, "Army View of Close Air Support in the Korean War," 3.
133. Caddell, "Orphan of Unification," 31–32.
134. MacIsaac, "Voices from the Central Blue," 643.

Chapter 5

An Airman's Perspective of Close Air Support in Korea

I know of no ground commander who has taken part in the Korean War who is satisfied that he is getting the best close air support possible. . . . However, over a period of 18 months, we have conducted a reasonably effective campaign for the first time under a truly unified command—without serious involvement in opposing service policies. It would appear undesirable to become embroiled in them at this late date.

—Brig Gen Edwin Wright, USA

FEAF and Fifth Air Force leaned over backward to provide more than adequate close air support when ground forces became actively engaged, and at other times maintained a rather high level of effort on close support in order to maintain the air-ground teamwork and know-how in a state of well-oiled proficiency.

—Maj Gen Otto P. Weyland, USAF

Throughout the Korean War, such Airmen as Gen O. P. Weyland had to defend continually the Air Force's performance of CAS. Although the criticism was neither unanimous nor entirely accurate, there was always an individual or two who managed to stir up controversy and keep the debate alive.¹ The first person to challenge Air Force CAS operations continually was Gen Ned Almond. As General MacArthur's chief of staff and protégé, Almond held a powerful position in the Army-centric GHQ. As evidenced by Weyland's first encounter with Almond, the two-star Army general had some preconceived notions about the employment of tactical airpower. In *Lt. Gen. Ned Almond, USA, A Ground Commander's Conflicting View with Airmen over CAS Doctrine and Employment*, Michael Lewis declares that Almond "may have been among the most well-rounded officers to serve and hold high rank in the United States armed forces."² Almond, an infantryman by trade, served his country with distinction in both World War I and World War II before serving in Korea.

General Weyland (Air Force) versus General Almond (Army)

What differentiated Almond from most of his peers was that he attended ACTS in 1938.³ Ironically, Weyland had attended ACTS in 1937.⁴ Undoubtedly, it was this experience as a lieutenant colonel that helped Almond form some

distinct opinions on the CAS mission.⁵ Notably, Lewis highlights that Almond volunteered to attend the school because "he felt there was a great need for ground officers understanding the capabilities and possibilities of the Air Force in support of ground operations."⁶ As an infantryman, Almond, with little surprise, felt the Air Force and ACTS focused too much attention on strategic airpower theory. While in agreement with ACTS on the importance of air superiority, the future general disagreed with two aspects of the tactical curriculum. Almond believed the ground commander should operationally control airpower; and, he felt that tactical airpower was best employed in direct support of ground forces. At the time, ACTS favored supporting ground forces through independent air interdiction operations.⁷ Lewis outlined five specific beliefs that Almond supposedly carried with him after leaving ACTS. They included the following:

- firepower (artillery and air) was extremely important to the support of ground operations;
- lines of communications were a critical factor to consider in all military operations;
- air superiority was the first priority of airpower;
- air officers fervently emphasized strategic bombing and independent air action at the expense of CAS; and,
- the Air Force should build a single-purpose CAS aircraft.⁸

Inchon Landing

Arguably, the amphibious landing at Inchon provided Air Force CAS critics such as Almond with more substance for their argument. On 15 September 1950, X Corps, under the leadership of Major General Almond, landed at Seoul's port of Inchon. In *In South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, Army historian Roy E. Appleman recounts that "General MacArthur officially assigned General Almond to command X Corps on 26 August."⁹ In a rather interesting use of personnel, MacArthur decided that Almond would continue to serve as his chief of staff. Perhaps MacArthur's short-term view of the war contributed to his decision. Appleman further explains MacArthur's rationale: "His view was that Almond would command X Corps for the Inch'on [sic] invasion and the capture of Seoul, that the war would end soon thereafter, and Almond would then return to his old position in Tokyo. In effect, the Far East Command would lend Almond and most of the key staff members of the corps for the landing operation."¹⁰

Appleman states that Almond was also surprised by his boss' decision to place him in charge of the landing, as he expected to remain in Tokyo as chief of staff. However, Almond was extremely loyal to MacArthur and had a solid reputation in the Army for being able to make a decision under any conditions.¹¹ Appleman offers this description of the fiery leader: "General Almond was a man both feared and obeyed throughout the Far East Com-

mand. Possessed of a driving energy and a consuming impatience with incompetence, he expected from others the same degree of devotion to duty and hard work that he exacted from himself. No one who ever saw him would be likely to forget the lightning that flashed from his blue eyes. . . . He never hesitated before difficulties. Topped by iron-gray hair, Almond's alert, mobile face with its ruddy complexion made him an arresting figure despite his medium stature and the slight stoop of his shoulders.¹²

The Inchon plan called for Almond's forces, which consisted of the 1st Marine Division and the US 7th Infantry Division, to seize the beachhead with a follow-on objective of Kimpo airfield and Seoul.¹³ Air support for the operation was provided by the Navy's Task Force 77 and the 1st Marine Air Wing (MAW).¹⁴ Despite some earlier planning concerns by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, MacArthur's Inchon landing achieved outstanding results. With Marine aviators providing ground support for their comrades, X Corps was able to push North Korean forces out of Seoul towards Pusan. Once again, the Marine CAS system received rave reviews. One observer notes that "Tasked organized for amphibious-type operations, X Corps enjoyed an abundance of aircraft and control agencies."¹⁵ With a TACP assigned to virtually every battalion in both divisions, commanders could plan air strikes in conjunction with ground maneuvers and had the luxury of Marine *Corsairs* orbiting overhead for emergencies. Although Fifth Air Force did not fly any CAS for the operation, they did contribute numerous TACPs to maximize X Corps air-ground capability.¹⁶

A letter Almond received from one of his artillery officers best illustrates the satisfaction that ground soldiers felt with the Marines providing air-ground support. This officer, who came ashore with the Marines at Inchon, conveyed these thoughts to his commander.

I believe the outstanding thing we learned was the support furnished by the 1st Marine Air Wing who really know what tactical air support means and how to provide it . . . to get a strike, all that was necessary was to have the tactical air control party with the front line battalion request a strike and within minutes it was there. . . . Some of the strikes were within 200 yards of the front lines but they were never in danger, which is a far different story than we had in World War II. From this experience, I am convinced that either the Air Force must furnish similar support or the Army must have its own tactical air, and the Air Force to go off into the "wild blue yonder" with their strategic "hoopla."¹⁷

Almond and the Marine CAS System

In light of Almond's earlier beliefs regarding tactical airpower, the outstanding air support he received at Inchon and personal accounts like the one above, it is no surprise that he ended the "Inchon-Seoul campaign as a vocal and unrestrained champion of Marine close air support."¹⁸ As such, he held nothing back in his praise of the Marines, and more importantly, his criticism of the Air Force to anyone who would listen—including the press corps assigned to his headquarters. To most Air Force commanders, it looked like the "1st MAW functioned as a tactical air command for X corps."¹⁹

FEAF leadership was frustrated with Almond's assertions for several reasons. One was that the Air Force believed in the centralized control of all airpower and in the principle of "unity of effort." Generals Stratemeyer and Weyland continually struggled with the Navy and Marines over this issue. A second reason the Air Force took exception to Almond's criticisms is that he "had never experienced CAS by the Fifth Air Force, so he could hardly have been able to compare the two approaches. Unlike Almond, other ground commanders who had received Fifth Air Force support were effusive in their praise of this help."²⁰ For example, Gen Walton H. Walker, Eighth Army commander, was forthright about Fifth Air Force's efforts during the defense of the Pusan Perimeter: "I am willing to state that no commander ever had better air support than has been furnished the Eighth Army by the Fifth Air Force. . . . I will gladly lay my cards right on the table and state that if it had not been for the air support that we received from the Fifth Air Force we would not have been able to stay in Korea."²¹ After providing support for the Inchon landing in the form of TACPs, General Stratemeyer was taken aback by Almond's actions and wrote the following passage in his diary: "General Almond is not a team player and is attempting to control, contrary to all written documents, the Air Force that supports him. His attitude ever since he has been appointed a commander has surprised me greatly. I should think that he would be grateful and would express his thanks for the communications and assistance we have given the troops that have been placed under his control, but according to General Partridge (Fifth Air Force Commander), he has not done so."²²

A third reason was the unparalleled success that Eighth Army achieved during the Pusan breakout and the maturation of the Army-Air Force CAS system during the drive north to the 38th parallel.²³ In Benjamin Franklin Cooling's *Case Studies in the Development of Close Air Support*, Allan R. Millett concludes that the Air Force was successful because of "a better understanding of close-support tactics, ordnance effectiveness, and the growing competence of the Mosquitos [Airborne Forward Air Controllers]."²⁴ He goes on to say that "after two days of hard fighting, the Pusan breakout became a rout with Fifth Air Force fighter bombers hammering at the retreating North Koreans. . . . The Air Force devastated Communist forces behind the front."²⁵ Herein lay the last and perhaps most fundamental, but underlying reason the Air Force despised Almond's criticisms. Interdiction operations during the defense of the Pusan Perimeter had finally proved their merit. Yet, the Air Force did not receive the credit it deserved for both the interdiction strategy and their ability to weaken the enemy severely. General Weyland explained this sentiment in an article written in 1953 for the *Air University Quarterly Review*. "The Air Campaign in Korea" described Weyland's overall impressions of the war and the lessons learned.²⁶ Concerning interdiction operations at the Pusan Perimeter, Weyland felt that the Air Force might have been slighted.

The immobilized and disorganized NKPA, denuded of its heavy weapons and relatively immobile, was effectively destroyed in place as the advancing Eighth

Army captured great numbers of troops. Practically all of the remaining equipment was captured or destroyed well south of Seoul. I am afraid that too little attention was given at the time to what had happened to the enemy because of air attacks. It was not until our army had broken out of the Pusan perimeter that its leaders became aware of the magnitude of the air destruction. The Inchon landing had been planned for the precise purpose of accomplishing a lateral envelopment of the enemy. But I think the facts show that its actual effects were quite secondary to the air attacks in the destruction of the NKPA. . . . Be that as it may, the effects of the Inchon landing partially beclouded those of the air attacks. There was not time for UNC commanders to stop and appraise the true role of air power as we launched our land campaign for the capture and control of North Korea.²⁷

Wonsan Landing

When President Truman made the decision to cross the 38th parallel and seek the reunification of Korea, both Almond and the FEAF continued their tempestuous relationship. Because of X Corps' success at Inchon, MacArthur pressed for another amphibious type operation at Wonsan, on the peninsula's Eastern coast. While trying to recapture the same TACP ratio he utilized at Inchon, Almond requested that the Fifth Air Force allocate X Corps 36 TACPs, "a plan that would have provided every infantry battalion under his control with a TACP."²⁸ Unable to meet this unrealistic demand, the FEAF responded with four TACPs and reminded Almond of the agreed-upon guidelines of the Joint Training Directive. Nonetheless, Almond remained wedded to the superiority of the Marine CAS system.²⁹

As at Inchon, Almond attempted to fashion the 1st MAW as his own private air force. However, thanks to the efforts of Stratemeyer and Weyland, the Marines were told to stay put at Kimpo airfield near Seoul until the landing force secured Wonsan airfield. Under Almond's plan, marine aviation would have been effectively grounded two weeks before the invasion, thus making them unavailable to ground forces engaged in battle.³⁰ Two days before the landing was to take place, Army troops supported by the Fifth Air Force captured the Wonsan objective and continued to press north.³¹ Almond's frustration at being upstaged by the Republic of Korea-US Air Force team reached its zenith when they were delayed an additional five days because of extensive mining operations in the Wonsan harbor. General Weyland expressed his satisfaction at Almond's unfortunate turn of events: "It kind of ribbed the Army and Ned Almond" when he arrived and "Bob Hope was there giving a show to my people."³²

Weyland on Close Air Support

As the tactical expert within the FEAF, General Weyland was one of the first individuals to study CAS operations and publish the results. The report, "Some Lessons of the Korean War and Conclusions and Recommendations concerning USAF Tactical Air Responsibilities," was written on 10 October 1950.³³ The paper was fairly all inclusive with respect to Air Force CAS in the first few months of the war and highlighted some of Weyland's

personal frustration with tactical airpower. Although Weyland disagreed with critics' charges that the Air Force had adopted a "misguided" strategy regarding strategic airpower, he did hold that both the USAF and Army needed to rethink some of their fundamental assumptions that dictated current doctrine, forces, and planning for joint operations.³⁴ Air superiority was a perfect example. Weyland stated that because of the Air Force's success in gaining air superiority, many people in all services are taking that mission for granted. Moreover, they also fail to understand that in a future conflict, air superiority against a more capable threat will place a significant demand on airpower resources. As Weyland points out, "Ground forces have operated in Korea with complete immunity from hostile air action, and with overwhelming air support."³⁵

Another false assumption held that the primary purpose of airpower was to support ground forces directly. According to Weyland, because of the Air Force's early dominance in the air, many people began to interchange the word *airpower* with *close air support*. While not dismissing the criticality of the ground situation in the early months of the war, Weyland clearly felt that the interdiction mission was not emphasized enough. He states that "the principles and criteria involved in the isolation of the battle area by air power were not well understood in this theater at the beginning of the conflict. The isolation or interdiction program was belatedly started but is now paying off."³⁶ Weyland also highlighted the Army's lack of artillery and its effect on airpower strategy, saying, "The Eighth Army has suffered consistently from a shortage of artillery ammunition. This ground force deficiency is one reason why the Fifth Air Force has been forced to put an exorbitant effort on close support. This of course decreased the Fifth Air Force capability to isolate the battlefield."³⁷

In the second section of his paper, Weyland highlighted a number of erroneous conclusions that might be drawn from the fighting in Korea: first, that air superiority could be assumed in planning for future joint operations; second, that the success with which the F-51 was applied in Korea indicated that propeller-driven aircraft were superior to jets in the CAS mission and should be perpetuated; third, that the essentially tactical character of the Korean air war indicated that USAF's emphasis on strategic bombing was unnecessary; and fourth, that unlimited supplies of air support would always be available to ground forces.³⁸

Weyland concluded his report with a couple of recommendations. The most important may have been his mandate to establish TAC as a major command "co-equal with other air commands, and co-equal with Army Field Forces."³⁹ Weyland encouraged the Air Force to "make the build-up of TAC a high priority and to pledge to keep it so upon the conclusion of the Korean conflict."⁴⁰ To Weyland, the first few months of the war clearly indicated that the Air Force could not afford to allow its tactical capability to wane as it did after the end of World War II. As for CAS, Weyland felt that despite some early reluctance on the part of ground forces in this theater, the doctrine of FM 100-20, *Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict*,

and the procedures of FM 31-35 had proven sound and were generally accepted by most ground force units.⁴¹ Unfortunately for Weyland, the idea that the Army was satisfied with current CAS doctrine would prove to be “wishful thinking.”

The Army Propaganda Machine

During his time as X Corps commander, “Almond maintained regular correspondence with Gen J. Lawton Collins, Army chief of staff.”⁴² Gen Mark W. Clark, Army commander of fielded forces at the Pentagon, was another of Almond’s confidants. Both Almond and Clark frequently advocated the Marine CAS system “as their model of how a CAS system should operate, especially in the area of operational control.”⁴³ In a letter dated 24 October 1950, General Clark, in consultation with Almond, wrote General Collins and highlighted the numerous advantages of the Marine system. Moreover, Clark once again emphasized the Army’s position relative to operational control of tactical airpower assets; this time with a slight modification. Not only would the Army have operational control of CAS, but also air commanders would have to request interdiction missions, by exception, through the ground commander.⁴⁴

In the late fall of 1950, General Collins decided to address the protests of such leaders as Almond and Clark by conducting a study to determine the actual effectiveness of CAS operations in the war. Collins appointed Brig Gen Gerald J. Higgins, commander of the Army Support Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to lead the study. Collins also filed a “formal criticism of close-air-support operations with Air Force Chief of Staff Hoyt Vandenberg.”⁴⁵ In the letter, Collins expressed his disappointment with the current attempt at interservice “cooperation” and the Air Force’s “apparent lack of interest in ground attack missions.”⁴⁶ The Army chief of staff recommended two changes for CAS in Korea. First, that field army commanders and their corps subordinates be given operational control of all tactical aircraft on a scale of one Air Force group for one Army division; and second, that the Air Force increase the number of TACPs it provided to units in the field.⁴⁷ Although Vandenberg defended the Air Force position, General Collins had now “raised the question of close-air-support reform at the highest levels,” and he “intended to press the issue.”⁴⁸

Ever so eager to blunt Army criticisms, the Air Force, under direction from its secretary, Thomas K. Finletter, and Vandenberg, dispatched its own CAS study group to Korea. This high-level study group was led by Air Force Maj Gen Glenn O. Barcus, a well-known tactical airpower expert, and Dr. Robert L. Stearns, president of the University of Colorado. The Air Force was also concerned about the negative publicity the CAS controversy was receiving on Capitol Hill and how that would affect its plans in Congress to create an expanded force (95 group/wing force).⁴⁹ As such, the Barcus-Stearns study was needed to “tell” the Air Force side of the CAS story and hopefully downplay any doctrinal disputes that may be perceived by those in power.

Millett argues that “Aware that Congressman [Carl] Vinson, a Navy-Marine champion and the House Armed Services Committee chairman, still favored giving ground force commanders more direct control of tactical aviation, Finletter and Vandenberg pressed Stratemeyer to give them good news on air operations in Korea.”⁵⁰ As such, they should have been pleased with the results of the Higgins report, published on 1 December 1950.⁵¹

Higgins Report

At the beginning of the report, Brig Gen Gerald Higgins addressed the lack of joint participation in air-ground operations prior to the onset of hostilities in Korea.

First, it was well known in this theatre that agreements at the JCS level had been reached which in effect, assigned far greater importance to Strategic Air at the expense of Tactical Air. Secondly, the primary mission of the Fifth Air Force was the air defense of Japan. Thirdly, the primary mission of the Eighth Army was the ground defense of Japan. Accordingly, both Air and Ground forces in this theatre were particularly interested in preparing to meet assignments in which it appeared to them that air support of ground units would be of relatively little importance—or actually non-existent. Neither the Air Forces nor the Ground Forces concentrated on building up either a Tactical Air Control System (TACS) or an Air Ground Operations System (AGOS) - Joint Operations Center (JOC) - an adequate number of TACP's . . . and above all, had no large scale exercises in which air-ground operations were stressed or even employed. However, considering the decision made at the JCS level—a decision that must still be regarded as fundamentally sound—it is apparent that neither the Air Forces nor the Ground Forces in the theatre can be held essentially responsible for the state of unpreparedness to meet the unusual situation presented by the action of the North Koreans on 25 June 1950.⁵²

Another area that Higgins focused on in his report was the comparison between the Marine Corps and the Army-Air Force CAS systems. Higgins “acknowledged that the Marine Corps system was more efficient and effective in very close-in support.”⁵³ However, he realized that the Marine Corps system was specifically designed to deliver quick and overwhelming fire-power to a small area in a short time with the perfect example being an amphibious landing. As such the Marine Corps organization, tactics, techniques, and training were predicated on this assumption.⁵⁴ General Stratemeyer recognized this factor at Inchon. He observed that the narrow front at Inchon was well served by the Marine style of CAS. Because the Marines had relatively few men in contact with the enemy on such a small front, they were able to keep their aircraft overhead continuously. The Air Force, on the other hand, had to protect up to 150 miles of front lines.⁵⁵

Higgins also addressed a factor that was often overlooked with the Marine system—the role of naval aviation: “Navy planes provided top cover and general air support while the Marine fighter-bombers performed their specialty, close air support.”⁵⁶ In addition, with the absence of enemy naval forces, Navy aircraft carriers could remain right off shore and provide ready-made bases for Marine and Navy aircraft. According to Higgins,

when you play the “numbers” game and try to adapt the Marine system to the Air Force, these extra forces and capabilities must be considered. For example, under the Marine system, approximately 215 fighter-bomber aircraft support one division. Yet, “by contrast, at the height of air-ground activities during World War II the divisions of the 12th Army Group were supported by an average of less than 35 Army Air Force (AAF) planes.”⁵⁷ If the Air Force-Army did adopt the Marine system for their six divisions serving Korea in 1950, the total number of planes required would be 1,296.⁵⁸ Furthermore, if naval aircraft were considered, the total aircraft requirement could conceivably double. For obvious reasons, Higgins concluded, “The cost of such support would be beyond the nation’s economic industrial capacity.”⁵⁹

In sum, the report concluded that the “Marine Air System as operated in Korea was initially, at least, superior to the Air Force system but that it would be illogical, if not dangerous, to impose such a system on the Air Force and the Army.”⁶⁰ Moreover, the report stated that despite inadequate ground equipment and training deficiencies, Air Force CAS of the Army was effective.⁶¹ Still further, the report outlined that “the superior degree of cooperation has been mentioned earlier, and it represents the largest single step forward in the already achieved coordinated effort. It is again emphasized, that within the limitations imposed by existing deficiencies, the tactical air support of Ground Forces in Korea is now quite effective. The Army-Air Force system is sound, and it may be concluded that air support in Korea will become more and more efficient as better tools become available.”⁶²

General Almond's Report (X Corps "Staff Study")

General Almond, disappointed by the preliminary findings of the Higgins Report, decided to conduct his own study of CAS. On 25 December 1950, he released a report titled “Army Tactical Air Support Requirements.”⁶³ The report was founded on the “assumption that determination of Army support requirements must be based upon Army needs, devoid of Air Force or budgetary policies, priorities, or missions because the Army has the primary interest in such support.”⁶⁴ The report, or more importantly Almond, concluded “that the Field Army or separate corps commanders should have operational control over supporting tactical air units.”⁶⁵ To support his findings, Almond compared CAS provided by Fifth Air Force with that of the 1st MAW. Figure 2 depicts the comparison (Marine advantage versus Fifth Air Force disadvantage) between the two different air units in such categories as aircraft type, mission, training, TACPs, command and control, organization, and communications.⁶⁶

In a confidential memorandum dated 19 January 1951, General Weyland provided comments on Almond's findings to Maj Gen E. E. Partridge. First, Weyland attacked Almond's prescription for joint operations in support of the theater commander. According to Weyland, this study was based on the concept of one service receiving a joint service effort to achieve success in

<u>FACTOR</u>	<u>MARINE AIR WING ADVANTAGE</u>	<u>FIFTH AIR FORCE DISADVANTAGE</u>
TYPE AIRCRAFT	DESIGNED FOR TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT.	DESIGNED FOR FIGHTER MISSIONS PRIMARILY.
MISSION	TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT PRIMARY MISSION.	TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT NOT HIGHER THAN THIRD PRIORITY.
TRAINING	EXTENSIVE AIR-GROUND TRAINING, COMPLETE, FAMILIARITY WITH AND UNDERSTANDING OF SUPPORTED UNIT TACTICS, PROBLEMS AND TECHNIQUES.	VIRTUALLY NO AIR-GROUND TRAINING INITIALLY, BUT METHODS OF SUPPORTING. GROUND UNITS ARE NOW UNDER DEVELOPMENT.
TACTICAL AIR CONTROL PARTIES (TACP's)	ONE PER INFANTRY BATTALION AND HIGHER UNIT—13 PER INFANTRY DIVISION.	ONE PER INFANTRY REGIMENT AND HIGHER UNIT—FOUR PER INFANTRY DIVISION.
CONTROL	SENIOR GROUND COMMANDER IN OPERATIONAL CONTROL.	SENIOR AIR FORCE COMMANDERS IN OPERATIONAL CONTROL, COOPERATING WITH SENIOR ARMY COMMANDER.
ORGANIZATION	DEFINITELY DESIGNED FOR TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT OF UNITS DOWN TO INFANTRY BATTALION.	DESIGNED FOR PRIMARY MISSIONS OTHER THAN TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT. NO SPECIFIC ALLOCATION OF NUMBERS OF SQUADRONS PER ARMY OR CORPS.
COMMUNICATIONS	SIMPLIFIED-LOCAL.	COMPLICATED, INSUFFICIENT, REQUIRING FIELD ARMY-TACTICAL AIR FORCE LEVEL DETAILED CONTROL.

Figure 2. Almond Report (Marine advantage versus Fifth Air Force disadvantage) (Reprinted from Charles W. Dickens, *A Survey of Air-Ground Doctrine*, Tactical Air Command Historical Study NR 34 [Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Force Historical Research Agency, 1958].)

one small piece of the puzzle. In this case, it was Almond's piece of the puzzle. Weyland also took issue with Almond's assumption about "what" the Army needs because it has the primary interest in air-ground support. Weyland succinctly stated "the ambitions or desires of any service must be subordinated to the requirements of overall national security. Budgetary limitations and policies cannot be written off by a paper assumption. Similarly one service cannot very logically 'assume' the policies, priorities, or missions of another service even though they have an interest therein."⁶⁷

Section four of the memo provides Weyland's comments that he directed at the Marine-Air Force comparison. In each category, Weyland disputes what he considered the biased observations of the report. Under additional comments, he reemphasized the point that is somehow continually overlooked when comparing the two different services. While the United States Marine Corps was employing CAS for a small portion of the UN ground forces, the USAF was flying CAS for the rest of the UN contingent, performing interdiction of enemy supply lines, and ensuring air superiority for all friendly forces.⁶⁸ In addition, Weyland highlighted that the Fifth Air Force was in Korea on the first day of the war and had "rendered close support

and interdiction at a high, steady rate every day since to whoever needed it most.”⁶⁹ In contrast to the Air Force, evidence revealed that the 1st MAW operated very aggressively when the 1st Marine Division was in action; however, its sortie rates fell off considerably at other times.⁷⁰

No statement in the report irritated Weyland more than Almond’s assertion that “experience” proved that the Marine system of tactical air support was the only reliable one. Since Weyland’s tactical reputation was solidified in World War II, he couldn’t resist taking a dig at Almond. Weyland reasoned that “ground force generals Bradley, Patton, Eisenhower, Simpson, Hodges, Montgomery of Alemain, and their air opposite members are men of far more extensive experience than the originators of this study. This recorded experience is at variance with the above statement.”⁷¹ As with Stratemeyer’s puzzlement over Almond’s criticism of Fifth Air Force operations, Weyland too was taken aback by the Army general’s propensity to judge and compare without having actually experienced Air Force CAS in the field.

The reality was that the X Corps study was initiated before Almond had any direct contact with the Fifth Air Force. After the fiasco at Wonsan, including X Corps “administrative” amphibious landing, the 1st MAW finally was placed under Fifth Air Force for operational control. At the time, X Corps made little attempt to establish “proper communications or representation in the JOC, or to wholeheartedly support Army-Air Force doctrine and procedures prescribed in FM 31-35 and elaborated in Joint Training Doctrine for Air-Ground Operations, 1 September 1950.”⁷² Interestingly enough, Weyland painted a rather disorganized and uncoordinated picture of ground operations as the United States pushed into North Korea. With Walker’s Eighth Army on the West Coast and Almond’s X Corps on the East Coast, plenty of opportunity existed for uncoordinated operations. Robert Frank Futrell explains that for some unknown reason, MacArthur chose to split the command of his ground forces. He goes on to state that “there were those who would report General Walker’s discontent with the arrangement and who would say that there was inadequate liaison between the Eighth Army and X Corps.”⁷³ Weyland concurred and compared the situation to the Air Force’s constant cry for unity of effort. “It’s just like airpower,” Weyland said, “they weren’t so goddamn separated; there were two different campaigns. It was the same enemy, and it was pretty well concentrated. But Almond wanted to make a name for himself, I guess. He’s a pretty smart guy. . . . Very charming socially. . . . Very charming . . . officially.”⁷⁴ Without a doubt, Weyland believed that Almond’s bias and preconceived opinions regarding tactical airpower made the X Corps study unfounded.⁷⁵

Barcus-Stearns Report

Based on observations of FEAF tactical air operations in the last two months of 1950, the Barcus-Stearns group released its findings in early 1951. Under pressure from the Air Force leadership, Dr. Stearns, who was hired specifically to evaluate lessons learned and recommend policy

changes, returned to the United States in January and filed a preliminary report.⁷⁶ A sense of urgency hung over the Air Force as Senator Carl Vinson suggested a congressional inquiry into CAS operations as early as January. Stearns gave the Air Force "generally high marks, especially emphasizing the superiority of jets in that role."⁷⁷ The Colorado school president also praised the B-29 for its strategic and tactical contributions. The only negative factor Stearns highlighted was the need for improvement in both joint doctrine and communications. The Barcus group, which returned in February, reiterated many of the overall findings of the Stearns report and was harsh in its treatment of those who criticized Air Force CAS operations. In fact, it stated that the press corps' constant comparison between Marine and Air Force CAS was "invidious and invalid."⁷⁸

Similar to the Higgins and Weyland reports, the final Barcus-Stearns account concluded that doctrine was basically sound; however, the Air Force needed to make some revisions "in light of technical and operational advances since the publications of FM 31-35 in 1946" and take "additional steps to improve the dissemination of its doctrine in the Air Force and other services."⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the main problem was that both services (Air Force and Army) had yet to provide the "trained staffs, control agencies, and communication systems necessary to make the doctrine work."⁸⁰ In addition to these findings, the report offered several recommendations to improve the current situation, including better radio equipment and vehicles for Air Force TACPs, better training for forward air controllers, a better effort on behalf of the Army to provide people and equipment to "fully man" the Air Ground Operations System, and a better indoctrination program for Army commanders in CAS operations.⁸¹

Perhaps not too surprising, conclusions in reference to the Marine versus Air Force "system comparison" actually favored the Air Force position. While praising the Marines for their ability to stay on station and provide a valuable morale boost for the forces on the ground, the report strongly defended Air Force tactics and procedures.⁸² Once again, they emphasized that because of sheer volume, it was not practical nor physically possible to implement the Marine CAS system in the Air Force. The report cited Almond's continuing quest for more TACPs. For example, in December 1950, "the three-division X Corps had thirty-seven TACPs, the five-division Eighth Army had twenty."⁸³ Both Barcus and Stearns could not envision an air force that could provide the Army with the same per unit ratio of aircraft or TACPs as the Marines "for an Army large enough to fight the Russians in Europe."⁸⁴ Furthermore, the report stated that jet aircraft could provide accurate air strikes, the Marine system of air alert was uneconomical for the Air Force, and that "ground commanders did not need operational control of a set quota of close air support sorties. Finally, the report highlighted that because air superiority was achieved and still maintained," the proportion of CAS, the FEAF, provided in Korea was extraordinarily heavy.⁸⁵ Therefore, future operations should not assume that the same level of support could be provided against a more capable threat. By

spring of 1951, a common theme had begun to surface for the senior leadership of the Air Force—doctrine and air support were adequate. However, the Air Force-Army CAS system still needed better implementation.

Despite the results of these evaluation reports and the positive claims of their senior leaders, several Air Force field commanders still felt threatened by the Army's continuing propaganda efforts to denigrate CAS. Some argued that "Korean operations had established a dangerous precedent for future theater air power, and had, perhaps, opened the door to organic Army tactical aviation."⁸⁶ Fifth Air Force officers claimed that the Army was requesting unnecessary air strikes that could have been more efficiently targeted by artillery. Besides the artillery concern, officers also felt that TACPs were considered little more than "ground force communications centers for coordinating air."⁸⁷ While CAS operations at the beginning of the war necessitated some deviation from established doctrine, conditions in the spring of 1951 did not warrant the same considerations. Col James F. Whisenand, future Air Force major general and the assistant deputy Air Force member on the Joint Strategic Plans Committee, offered the most telling explanation of the concern that permeated the Air Force: "Korean operations contributed to a situation which we are being forced more and more to accept the Air Force in a supporting role . . . to limit the application of air power to the support of a surface strategy and that we are gradually losing the battle for an effective air force."⁸⁸

Weyland as Commander of FEAF

Besides moving into a new phase of the war (Phase 3) in the summer of 1951, several command changes occurred within the FEAF and the Fifth Air Force. In May, General Stratemeyer experienced a heart attack that eventually forced his retirement. On 10 June Lieutenant General Weyland came back to Korea and took command of the FEAF from General Partridge, who had temporarily replaced Stratemeyer. Partridge returned to the states and was assigned as commander of the Air Research and Development Command at Baltimore, Maryland.⁸⁹ Maj Gen Frank F. Everest had replaced Partridge on 1 June as the commander of the Fifth Air Force.⁹⁰ Weyland, who had just been reassigned back to Langley in mid-April was excited about the command opportunity, but saddened at the sudden turn of events. In a personal letter written to a fellow "Aggie" on 1 June 1951, Weyland stated: "I appreciate more than I can say your recent note of congratulations. I am, of course, very pleased to have been selected as the combat air commander in the Far East, although I deplore General Stratemeyer's unfortunate illness which brought me back to the Far East."⁹¹ Several leaders, including Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, who had replaced General MacArthur as the FEC on 11 April 1951, applauded the appointment of Weyland.⁹²

At the end of the day, as I was visiting with Pat Partridge at his Fifth Air Force CP [Command Post], I learned the distressing news that George Stratemeyer,

Commander of the Far East Air Forces, had suffered a heart attack that afternoon. . . . He was a most gallant, experienced, and resourceful officer. But sudden changes are the rule in war, and much as I deplored this turn of fate, I was highly gratified to receive Lieutenant General Otto P. (Opie) Weyland, whom the Air Force promptly assigned as Stratemeyer's replacement. . . . I had long known Weyland . . . and I could not have had a more willing or able teammate for the remainder of my Far Eastern Service.⁹³

While Weyland was still vice commander of the FEAF in early 1951, he began to push for a change in the way airpower was employed. After taking over as commander, Weyland continued to pursue those changes actively. Because the movement of forces on both sides had started to stagnate, Weyland emphasized that a greater effort be placed on the interdiction of Communist forces moving south. The statistics seem to confirm this proposition. During the first six months of 1951, "FEAF aircraft flew 54,410 interdiction sorties and 22,800 close air support sorties."⁹⁴ Weyland's opinion on the interdiction role may have been influenced by two factors. First, because the United States and North Korea had both abandoned their goals of unification, the new objective for each was "the accomplishment of an armistice on favorable terms."⁹⁵ According to Weyland, the military strategy for the UNC was therefore modified. While ground forces were assigned a defensive role, air forces became the sole offensive component of the combined military strategy. Specifically, "UNC air forces were given the mission of denying the enemy the capacity to maintain and sustain further decisive ground attack, to maintain maximum pressure on the enemy in North Korea, and thus to create a situation conducive to a favorable armistice."⁹⁶

The second factor that may have influenced Weyland was opportunity and his firm belief in the USAF's current doctrine on tactical airpower. In a letter written to General Vandenberg on the day he assumed command, Weyland stated that this war "offered the Air Force an unparalleled opportunity to show how tactical air power could win a conventional war. The Air Force, therefore, should fully exploit its first real opportunity to prove the efficacy of air power in more than a supporting role."⁹⁷

In conjunction with command changes in the Air Force, the Army also began to relax somewhat in its criticism of CAS operations. Even General Almond, its biggest critic, allowed himself to unbend a little in his praise of the Air Force's performance. Almond stated in a message to the FEAF leadership: "Nothing is more heartening to the front-line soldier than to observe such striking power as was displayed in the X corps area during this period. [Airstrikes east of Seoul at the end of February 1951] Thanks to you and your command for this splendid cooperation."⁹⁸ Upon receiving the positive feedback, General Stratemeyer observed: "Even if we can't satisfy all his requests, perhaps we are beginning to impress upon Almond the fact that we are doing our level best to do a first rate job of air support for him."⁹⁹ Despite the small display of affection, Almond continued to argue against current CAS doctrine. However, even his contemporaries began to realize that his ideas might be impractical. For example, the Army was contemplat-

ing increasing the number of its divisions to one hundred. Because Almond proposed that each corps be assigned one group of fighter-bombers for CAS, the Air Force would "require more than 7,000 aircraft for the CAS mission alone."¹⁰⁰ In August 1951, Almond was reassigned to the states where he became commandant of the Army War College.¹⁰¹

General Van Fleet (USA) Supports Air Force CAS

While Weyland could not have been too disappointed at the departure of Almond nor the Army's somewhat indifference towards air operations, his battle with Army leadership over CAS issues was far from over. As the commander of the FEAF, he had to argue continually for the operational control and employment of tactical airpower. One of the first Army leaders to step up and take the place of Almond was Gen James A. Van Fleet, Eighth Army commander. Van Fleet arrived in Korea on 14 April 1951 and took command from Ridgway, who replaced MacArthur.¹⁰² Ironically, Van Fleet wholeheartedly supported Air Force tactical operations at the beginning of his tenure. In a memorandum sent to General Weyland, dated 18 September 1951, General Everest paraphrased a quote that Van Fleet had mentioned to General Ridgway in a meeting among Ridgway, Van Fleet, and Everest on 17 September: "You may hear from some corps and division commanders in the Eighth Army that they are not getting all the close support they would like or that, in some instances, they must postpone attacks until air support can be provided. I want it this way. Everest is engaged in an interdiction program that is paying dividends and will directly benefit the Eighth Army and I would like to see his program continued. If we need close support to meet an emergency or to bolster a special attack, I know we can get it."¹⁰³

Less than three weeks later, Van Fleet once again promoted Air Force operations when Maj Gen Gerald C. Thomas, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, openly criticized them.¹⁰⁴ After the Marine complaints became public, General Everest discussed them firsthand with General Thomas and responded with a letter to Ridgway (through Weyland and sent to Van Fleet) on 5 October 1951.¹⁰⁵ In the letter, Everest stated that the Marines had two complaints: they were not getting enough CAS, and they wanted to be supported by marine aircraft. Moreover, Thomas specifically requested that the 1st MAW provide a minimum of 40 CAS sorties a day to the 1st Marine Division. In response to the complaints, Everest provided Ridgway data explaining that during the month of September the 1st Marine Division (one division) had actually received 40 percent of the total CAS sorties flown. In addition, 68 percent of that CAS was flown by the 1st Marine Wing and the rest by either the Navy or the Fifth Air Force. Furthermore, if Thomas' 40-sortie request had been granted in September, the 1st Marine Division "would have received 49 percent of the total close air support sorties which were flown for the entire Eighth Army."¹⁰⁶ General Everest recommended the disapproval of the Marine request for a minimum of 40 CAS sorties a day. Everest stated:

The Fifth Air Force is prepared to devote as much of its effort to close support as the CG [commanding general], Eighth Army, deems necessary. There are other important tasks such as interdiction of lines of communication, neutralization of enemy airdromes, escort and flak suppression for bombardment aircraft which compete for the limited amount of fighter-bomber effort available. The present program for the distribution of air effort has been arrived at after consultation between the staffs of the Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force. . . . I feel it is a sound division of effort, under the circumstances that presently exist. It is fully recognized that a greater percentage of air should and will go to close support when the tactical situation dictates. . . . Favorable treatment of the 1st Marine Division, at the expense of other United Nations forces in Korea, is not believed to be justified.¹⁰⁷

Weyland, in response to Everest's letter, emphasized that tactical air-power in the Far East theater should be used to accomplish the Far East Commander's mission best. He further stated: "I believe that the Commanding General, Fifth Air Force, has been employing his forces to achieve optimum contribution to the overall mission and in the best interests of all United Nations forces. I further believe that allocation of air as requested by the Commanding General, First Marine Division would result in less than optimum utilization, and would constitute unwarranted discrimination in the support of United Nations Ground Forces."¹⁰⁸

After reading Everest's letter, Van Fleet drafted his own response to Ridgway and reiterated his earlier position regarding the priorities of tactical air support.

I am in thorough agreement with General Everest's comments. . . . The present agreement between Fifth Air Force and this headquarters concerning the allocation of aircraft is believed sound. Priority at this time is, and should continue to be for the present, given the interdiction program. Should an emergency arise such as a major enemy offensive, a major offensive on our part, or should other profitable targets appear at any time, the Fifth Air Force, [sic] (and units attached to it for operational control) will immediately give me maximum support and effort, where I want it. This plan cannot reach maximum effectiveness if we are required to allocate any one unit along the front a specific number of sorties on an exclusive and continuing basis. . . . The present policy for use of aircraft available for support of this command is the only method I know of whereby equitable allocation can be provided all ground combat forces of the United Nations' effort in Korea.¹⁰⁹

Van Fleet's noteworthy praise for the Air Force may have been partially influenced by the results of a CAS study conducted by the Army-funded Operations Research Office.¹¹⁰ According to Millett, "The Assistant Chief of Staff (G-3) issued an *ex cathedra* opinion that the JTD [Joint Training Directive] was indeed sound. The Army officially agreed with the Air Force that interdiction took priority over close air support."¹¹¹ Because of the concern for the amphibious mission, the study also suggested that the Marines might have used poor statistical analysis to make their case for more sorties and close support. Finally, the Army study concluded "the Air Force and Army could not wage tactical air war Marine-style since the Air Force could not provide sufficient TACPs and fighter-bombers for a mass

army.”¹¹² Therefore, the study recommended that “all targets within a mile of troops should be attacked with heavy artillery, not air.”¹¹³

General Ridgway, as the joint commander, was caught between the Marines, on the one hand, and Weyland, Van Fleet, and his staff, on the other. To avoid interservice conflict at the theater level, Ridgway quietly ruled that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were the only “real” authority to solve the CAS problem.¹¹⁴ Ridgway sent a memorandum to Major General Thomas (1st Marine Division commander) and stated that he understood Thomas’ desire to have the 1st MAW in direct support of the division. However, since the Marines were not acting as an independent command in the Korean theater and were but one division in a corps of several divisions, their request was denied.¹¹⁵ Ridgway further explained his predicament: “The request you submitted if approved would occasion so wide a departure from sound practice as well as fair treatment, as to be quite unacceptable.”¹¹⁶ According to Millett, with the Army digging in along its new line of resistance and support from such leaders as Van Fleet, the CAS controversy in the fall of 1951 should have diminished.¹¹⁷ However, it “remained as alive as the Korean War.”¹¹⁸

Van Fleet’s Change of Heart

In a rather sudden and surprising manner, General Van Fleet changed his opinion regarding the current employment of tactical airpower. Without provocation, Van Fleet called General Everest on 18 December 1951 and requested a meeting to “discuss aspects of the close air support problem.”¹¹⁹ Documented in a memorandum written by Everest, Van Fleet began the meeting by expressing his appreciation for the all-out support provided the Eighth Army when requested. The Army general also felt that he had “played ball” with Everest in limiting his requests for close support for the Air Force to concentrate the bulk of its effort on interdiction. With the niceties out of the way, Van Fleet quickly identified the real reason for his visit; he proposed that operational control of CAS be given to the corps commander. According to Everest: “He [Van Fleet] began by describing the Corps organization of the Army as the basic fighting unit. It is given everything necessary to do the assigned tasks and then the Corps Commander is given a great deal of latitude in the method of employment of his forces as long as he stays within the scope of the Army plan. He runs his artillery; his engineers, his communications and everything else within his area of responsibility. Only in the field of close-air-support does he lack control.”¹²⁰ Like many of the previous Army proposals, Van Fleet suggested that one “squadron of fighter-bomber aircraft be assigned to each corps.”¹²¹ By doing this, Van Fleet felt that each corps commander would have a certain amount of “known” air to “use according to his own plan and his own requirements.”¹²²

After listening to Van Fleet’s proposal, Everest immediately pointed out the inflexibility of such a system and the importance of giving senior commanders [air or ground] the flexibility to shift priority from corps to corps

based on the tactical situation on the ground. Moreover, Everest argued that Van Fleet's proposal would ultimately generate fewer sorties on a day-to-day basis than the Eighth Army had averaged in the last six months.¹²³ Van Fleet replied "that the reduction in effort would more than be made up for by the satisfaction of the Corps Commanders in having something they could count on and run themselves."¹²⁴ General Everest finished his part of the discussion by emphasizing that he did not have the authority as the Fifth Air Force commander to deviate from established principles of air employment. Furthermore, the "battle ground for this inter-service argument is in Washington, not in Korea."¹²⁵ Although the entire conversation was conducted in what Everest described as a "most friendly atmosphere," Van Fleet, disappointed by Everest's response, finished the meeting by stating: "I guess I'm going to have to write something."¹²⁶

Throughout the memorandum, Everest documented that he felt Van Fleet was under considerable pressure from both the top and bottom of the Army chain of command to raise this issue with the Air Force. Both Everest and Weyland had a good working relationship with the Army commander as evidenced by his earlier support. Everest offered this opinion on Van Fleet's motivation for such a change.

This, of course, is Van Fleet voicing the established Army line announced by Joe Collins [Army Chief of Staff] last year and repeatedly referred to by him in public utterances – the same song Mark Clark has been telling for several years. As a matter of interest, Van Fleet said, "I guess Mark Clark has finally convinced Joe that he is right, and Joe is ready to move." I don't think Van Fleet had any relish for the conversation. He normally is enthusiastic and direct. This time he was a bit hesitant and self-conscious. He is a very honest man and he knows damn well he has gotten full and whole-hearted support from the Fifth Air Force and I doubt that he really believes in the proposal he was trying to peddle.¹²⁷

On 20 December, Van Fleet crafted his letter and sent it to General Ridgway. Similar to his meeting with Everest, Van Fleet began by complimenting the Air Force: "As the ground commander, I am grateful for the complete freedom of action provided me by the air superiority that has been maintained. I am confident that the interdiction program, which has my wholehearted support, has kept the enemy from exploiting his ground superiority and has prevented the launching of an attack which my forces would be hard pressed to contain."¹²⁸ Van Fleet then took issue with the Air Force's overall effort in supporting the air-ground mission.

The Air Force mission in which the ground force commander is vitally concerned, and in which he has a definite coordinate interest is, of course, the close support mission. As a result of an intimate daily close observation of air-ground operations over a period of the last eight months, I feel that I express the reaction of all ground commanders from company to corps level when I state that close support in this theater has not been developed to the degree which ground commanders anticipated. While the close air support in Korea has been highly successful, it is capable of much further development and improvement.¹²⁹

Finally, Van Fleet proposed a new organizational structure that would give the Army operational control of the CAS mission. He addressed three

recommendations: (1) Three Army corps units would each receive their own squadron of Marine aircraft; (2) air strikes would be controlled by Army personnel and supervised by the Air Force; and, (3) CAS sorties not utilized by the Army would be farmed back to the Air Force to be used in the interdiction effort.¹³⁰

Three days later (23 December), Everest forwarded Weyland a copy of Van Fleet's letter so Weyland could prepare his response to Ridgway, if questioned. On the cover sheet to Weyland, Everest noted that Van Fleet had provided him a copy of the letter without hesitation.¹³¹ Weyland's showdown with Ridgway occurred on 31 December. In his diary Weyland described the meeting with the FEC as amicable but frank. Ridgway mentioned that he had received a letter from Van Fleet raising several issues about CAS. He also stated "he did not in any way support the idea of Army taking over tactical air."¹³² Ridgway felt that Van Fleet came forth with this proposal without any pressure from him or anyone else for that matter. The bottom line was that Ridgway wanted Weyland to study Van Fleet's letter, keep an open mind, and provide a written response. However, Weyland, having already studied the contents of Van Fleet's letter for a number of days, was ready to provide some immediate feedback. Apparently, Ridgway did not suspect that Weyland had been provided a courtesy copy of Van Fleet's letter. Weyland described this rather emotional tirade in his diary.

I bluntly told General Ridgway that the tactical air business is and has been my racket for a long time; that I feel that I know the business; that I have had more experience in it than anybody that he has over here – certainly within the Army; that I was quite sympathetic and quite cognizant of the problems of the Ground Forces; that I had spent two and one-half years in an infantry division; and that I had worked with ground troops over a period of many years and I had been intimately associated with what I considered the finest Army the United States has ever had in Europe, and that I had operated with the forces in Korea and I felt that it was because of this experience that I had been assigned to the job. Stated that this subject is not new, it has come up several times here during the Korean war; I indicated my great regret that the cooperation which has existed between the Air and the Ground in the Korean conflict has not been on a comparable basis of mutual confidence and respect which I enjoyed with the 3d Army in Europe. I stated that I felt this must be due in part to my own shortcomings; however, that never in my previous experience had I encountered the multiplicity of devious aims and attempted interference, from Army sources, in the Air business that has occurred during the Korean conflict.¹³³

Weyland further emphasized that the Air Force chief of staff establishes doctrine and that this matter needs to be discussed and cleared at the Joint Chiefs of Staff level. He also seized the opportunity to take issue with Ridgway's claim that no one had pressured Van Fleet into this action. Weyland spoke freely of his contempt for General Almond and the "unfortunate attitude" that he had created within the Army and Air Force: "Pressure comes in numerous and devious ways, the preponderance being exerted from underneath, from the colonels, brigadier generals and division commanders who had been indoctrinated in the Almond-Clark thesis and that there are a number of these officers who have worked in the past and con-

tinue to work to bring pressure on the Air Force in an endeavor to achieve their aim of acquiring control over air power.”¹³⁴ Surprisingly, Ridgway agreed with Weyland’s assessment of Almond and labeled him an “extremist.” He [Ridgway] also “inferred that he was glad to be rid of him [Almond]” and stated that he would “tolerate no skull-duggery within the Army.”¹³⁵ Weyland, who had skillfully prepared for this meeting without revealing his privileged information, described his response in his diary.

I told him from the time he took command as CINCFE and when General Van Fleet took command of the Eighth Army, that the Air Force had had every reason to be optimistic of open, honest objective cooperation, and that until the advent of this letter, there has been no serious divergence of views. I stated that there has never been anything come up of sufficient importance to warrant my bringing it to General Ridgway’s attention; however, since he had so plainly indicated his belief that there was no pressure or skull-duggery afoot, I did mention to him that there has been numerous indications that pressure and skull-duggery continues to be afoot within subordinate elements of the Army.¹³⁶

Air Force leadership, including General Everest, had thought that the stagnant tactical situation on the ground “would result in fewer calls for CAS by the ground commander and allow him to focus more on interdiction. He was wrong. Many division commanders continued to insist on getting their ‘share’ of CAS.”¹³⁷ Weyland specifically cited the example of an Army division requesting a “minimum of 50 close air support sorties per day.”¹³⁸ He felt that the Army was intentionally making these unrealistic CAS requests to let the official record reflect that “the Air Force had not fulfilled their requests.”¹³⁹ In addition to the request problem, Weyland stated that some division commanders were having difficulty finding targets to justify CAS. Moreover, in many cases, CAS was being grossly misused against targets such as two- and three-man bunkers.¹⁴⁰ According to Weyland, the Army and especially Van Fleet defended this utilization of CAS because of their artillery shortage. Although the artillery argument was valid at the beginning of the war, statistics tell a slightly different story throughout 1952. In fact, “between June 1950 and December 1952, as much artillery and mortar fire was expended in Korea as had been shot in the Mediterranean and Pacific theaters combined during World War II.”¹⁴¹ Presented with this overwhelming observation, Ridgway had no comment. However, he did make the assumption that Weyland, for some unknown reason, agreed with the logic that all available firepower should be controlled and coordinated by the ground commander to accomplish his mission. Again, Weyland disagreed and offered this pointed response: “In my view the total of the air, the ground and navy forces were assigned to a theater commander—each to contribute its maximum capabilities to the accomplishment of the theater commander’s mission. I stated that the theater commander’s mission can not be delegated down to a division or a corps, that I felt that the total airpower within this theater therefore should be exercised under a centralized control to best accomplish his [Ridgway’s] mission and not Van Fleet’s mission or the mission or any corps or division commander.”¹⁴²

Following the meeting between the two leaders, Weyland further analyzed Van Fleet's recommendation and sent Ridgway his written response on 12 January 1952. The memo summarized many of the important points Weyland emphasized in his earlier meeting with Ridgway. Nonetheless, there was one additional thought that characterized Weyland's frustration with the Army's continued attempts to change the way CAS was organized and controlled. Weyland stated in the letter:

During World War II subordinate division and corps commanders in Europe were not always satisfied with the allocation of close air support aircraft and some of them urged that they be given control of some of the air. Upon conclusion of the conflict in Europe, a conference was held on 11 May 1945 on this subject at Twelfth Army Group Headquarters. It was attended by Generals Eisenhower, Spaatz, Bradley and Vandenberg, as well as the four American field army commanders under General Bradley, and the commanders of the three American tactical air commands [of which I was one] under General Vandenberg. The core of the discussion was whether air power should be split up a [sic] and assigned to the control of subordinate ground units or be kept under centralized air command with the detailed planning and cooperation effected at the Army Hq – Tactical Air Command Hq [new Tactical Air Force Hq] level. That group unanimously agreed that the command organization and operating procedures worked out in Europe should be retained and that all tactical air units in a theater should be kept under the centralized command and control of air force command echelons. Last March a joint Fifth Air Force – Eighth Army board analyzed the air-ground operations system currently employed and accepted the principles as generally sound and adequate and applicable in the Korean theater. I consider that the basic concepts of employment of tactical air as developed by experience and currently prescribed are sound.¹⁴³

For all of his beliefs on the proper employment of tactical airpower, Weyland still sympathized with Van Fleet's position and the plight of the soldier on the ground. Throughout his tour in Korea, Weyland "spent considerable time visiting Army units to understand their point [sic] of view."¹⁴⁴ He understood why soldiers wanted all help to root out the enemy of dug-in positions. He also understood the "disappointment in the Air Force that troops felt after heavy air attacks, when the enemy returned to the trenches and rolled their guns back to the mouths of caves to resume firing."¹⁴⁵ However, while conceding to Van Fleet the need for continued improvement in tactics and procedures, Weyland refused to give up operational control and overall responsibility.

In his diary, General Weyland documented his displeasure with the Army's propensity to criticize the Air Force continually, especially through the media, without identifying some of its own shortcomings. According to Weyland, General Stratemeyer's and later his own policy was to "absorb any criticism without recrimination and without criticism in return."¹⁴⁶ He explained that "any inter-Service criticism publically [sic] expressed regardless of the source or validity was bad for the war effort and was bad for the country."¹⁴⁷ The FEAFC commander said there were definitely shortcomings in the Air Force; however, there were also serious deficiencies in the Army and Navy. One such deficiency that limited tactical effectiveness was the

Army's logistical capability. In Van Fleet's proposal to Ridgway, he suggested "airfields be established close to front lines."¹⁴⁸ Weyland agreed with the premise and stated that establishing forward airfields has always been a basic principle in the employment of tactical airpower. However, in Korea, logistical deficiencies of the Army had forced the Air Force to establish airfields in the Pusan area. Weyland also highlighted what he called the "Inchon fiasco" as a case of poor logistical support. Even though the landing was secured, General Almond refused to put "aviation engineer units and their equipment and their supplies ashore."¹⁴⁹ The result was that forward airfields were not established until months later, which greatly affected the Fifth Air Force operations and the overall theater effort. If Weyland had been holding back in his criticism of air-ground operations for the good of the "team," this entire episode of interservice wrangling with Van Fleet and Ridgway brought out his disdain for the whole CAS controversy.

After deliberating over the letters (Van Fleet's and Weyland's response), Ridgway gave both to Brig Gen Edwin Wright of his staff for review.¹⁵⁰ Because of his military aspirations [Army chief of staff and possibly chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff], Weyland felt that Ridgway was in a precarious position. On one hand, he didn't want to offend and openly oppose a vocal element of the Army that wanted control of tactical airpower. On the other hand, his reputation as a joint forces commander and future ambitions in Washington dictated that he be "diplomatic and impartial in his relations between Army-Navy and Air Force."¹⁵¹ In the end, Van Fleet's proposal died a quiet death as Wright recommended to Ridgway that he "avoid getting involved in any dispute over interservice policies that might endanger the reasonable effectiveness they had achieved for the first time under a truly unified command."¹⁵² Although Wright suggested that Ridgway forward the letters to Washington for a discussion at the Joint Chiefs of Staff level, Ridgway refused and instructed Weyland and Van Fleet to work out their differences.¹⁵³ This was a personal victory for Weyland but still not the end to the battle over CAS.

Weyland and Gen Mark W. Clark

General Weyland's last public showdown over CAS involved Gen Mark W. Clark. Ultimately, Weyland felt the Army had a scheme to regain control of tactical air from the Air Force and they were going to use Korea as the platform.¹⁵⁴ If Ridgway did not generate the in-theater movement to champion the "control" issue nor force Van Fleet to write and distribute his letter, pressure had to come from Army circles back in the states. Since General Clark had colluded with Almond on previous attempts to discredit the Air Force, Weyland felt that Clark had to be the chief instigator. As luck would have it, Clark replaced Ridgway on 12 May 1952 as commander of the FEC and the UNC. Understandably, many Army officers involved in the CAS controversy were excited at Clark's appointment. With Clark's earlier criticisms and numerous public statements against the Air Force, many envisioned a significant change in CAS policies.¹⁵⁵ Weyland also described his concern over the

leadership change in a personal interview conducted in 1974: "Mark Clark was a different opponent by far than Ridgway, and much more difficult. I wasn't sure how that would all come out."¹⁵⁶

Similar to Weyland's showdown with Ridgway, Van Fleet began the process by forwarding a letter up the Army chain of command to Clark. The letter was almost identical to the one sent Ridgway a few months earlier.¹⁵⁷ However, this time, Van Fleet forwarded the letter without providing a copy to his air-ground partner, the Fifth Air Force commander. Major General Barcus (Barcus-Stearns Report) had taken command of Fifth Air Force from Everest on 30 May 1952.¹⁵⁸ When Barcus heard rumor of the Eighth Army commander's letter, he personally went to meet with Van Fleet on 14 June 1952. After a few minutes of pleasantries, Barcus told the Army commander that he was disturbed at reports concerning the Army's attempt to take control of several of his (Barcus) tactical air units. Barcus was especially concerned about the timing of the letter. Barcus informed Van Fleet that he was a "little disturbed that it should occur right at the time of the change of command."¹⁵⁹ Van Fleet downplayed the timing of the letter and explained that it was a continuation of the process started with Ridgway. Furthermore, General Clark had requested a report that provided Van Fleet's views on current air-ground operations. Van Fleet further stated to Barcus: "We have gone backward since the last war. I believe that each corps must have its own JOC and its own air units they support. By this decentralization, we can materially reduce the length of time required to mount a strike. Each pilot and airplane can fly 5 or 6 missions a day and we will lose none of the flexibility of the Air Force. This Tactical Air must be controlled and directed by Army personnel from the Division level down."¹⁶⁰

General Van Fleet continued to reason that he had a considerable interest in the Fifth Air Force and the CAS they provided to the Eighth Army. In addition, he explained that air superiority over the front lines and in the Army's rear area of operations was critical. Having heard enough, General Barcus replied with "My God," and exclaimed: "If we are to succeed as a team we must be honest and above board with each other at all times. I will give you my best at all times, but I will fight you to a finish on assigning Air units to Army units, and I regret that you saw fit to start a fight at this time. . . . I am afraid you are starting a fight that will make Koje-Do look like a picnic."¹⁶¹

Shortly after Barcus' meeting with Van Fleet, Weyland was summoned for a meeting with Clark. As in the earlier meeting with Ridgway, Weyland had somehow obtained a copy of Van Fleet's letter beforehand and once again prepared his strategy. When Clark showed Weyland the document, the FEAF commander feigned ignorance and slammed the message down on Clark's desk. In true Hollywood fashion, Weyland put on a furious act and stated: "This is the . . . way to run a war that I have ever heard of. . . . I've been through this racket before. As a matter of fact, I went through it with your predecessor. I won and I'll win again."¹⁶² Clark, obviously a little taken back by Weyland's forwardness, replied: "Well, now, see here, you know that I'm

the commander-in-chief over here, and I want to have consensus."¹⁶³ "I expect loyalty from my commanders."¹⁶⁴ Weyland responded:

Yes, I understand that. You have my loyalty. My loyalty is to give you the best advice and give you the best air power there is available. I am supposed to be the expert in it. Incidentally, loyalty goes both ways. You are wearing several different hats. You are a joint commander. You owe the same loyalty to the Navy. You owe the same loyalty to the Air Force as you do the Army, for which you happen to be the immediate commander there. So maybe you ought to lean over just a little bit backwards in this loyalty business. I don't take a backseat to anybody in loyalty. Certainly, I am loyal to you, and am going to be. I am going to see that you get what you are supposed to get and not accept some Army party line, which you are doing. You are wearing your Army hat, and you are trying to put over this same old Army party line. I am familiar with it. I have fought this battle many times, and I haven't lost yet. I don't intend to now, but if you want to have a fight with the Air Force, okay. I would rather fight the communists.¹⁶⁵

After making his point, Weyland admitted later that he thought he would get fired right then and there. For a moment, General Clark sat back in his chair and was silent. Weyland stated that Clark got quite pale over the whole discussion, as it was "in his blood to try and put this over."¹⁶⁶ Finally, Clark subsided and said, "Okay, we will fight the Communists."¹⁶⁷ On 11 August 1952 General Clark drafted a letter titled "Air-Ground Operations" and sent it out to all of his subordinate commanders. Highlights from the letter are presented below:

It should be borne in mind that the theater commander, rather than any single service, bears over-all responsibility for successfully prosecuting the Korean War. Each component contributes its own specialized capabilities to the attainment of the theater commander's over-all mission and in so doing assists the other components; however, **no single service exists solely or primarily for the support of another** (emphasis in original).

It is my considered opinion that no far-reaching or drastic changes or experiments which are contrary to the presently established close air support procedure and doctrine should be attempted at this time, based solely upon conditions that have prevailed in Korea during the present conflict. The doctrine and procedure in the Joint Training Directive for Air-Ground operations, dated 1 September 1950, was established only after the most comprehensive and exhaustive joint deliberation. It was based on a vast reservoir of experience data amassed on all fronts in World War II. It also **represents the composite view of senior members of the Armed Forces who had the longest and most responsible experience in close support during World War II** (emphasis in original).

It is well recognized that the Far East Air Force, in conjunction with Naval and Marine Air, has accomplished the air component's primary mission in a magnificent manner. The complete freedom from air attack which is enjoyed throughout United Nations-held territory, on the one hand, and the degree of destruction of North Korean production and transportation facilities, on the other hand, are examples of our accomplishments in only two aspects of the air component's mission. On the other hand, many Army and Marine officers have expressed disappointment in the close support effort that has been available. Regardless of the factors involved, this disappointment has resulted in criticism of the system established under the present joint directive for air-ground operations. It is a fact that, except for a few front line commanders who were positioned in the path of the Communist offensive in the spring of 1951, **few**

ground officers in Korea have experienced combat conditions which actually required all-out air support and, hence, have not experienced the benefits of maximum close air support (emphasis in original).

After careful study, **I consider that much of the criticism of the present system is not fully justified** – principally because the criticism is based on factors that are entirely unrelated to the system itself (emphasis in original).

I desire that all concerned re-examine their positions and direct their efforts toward perfecting the present system. It is recognized that any experiment in this field today under the restrictions imposed by the tactical situation in Korea will result in covering only a very narrow portion of the close air support field. However, all the steps involved in bringing and delivering the air ordnance on ground targets are used even in a stalemated defensive situation and the results of a test carried out under these conditions should produce factors that will be helpful in further examination of the procedures presently employed in the close air support field.¹⁶⁸

Weyland considered his showdown with Clark another well-fought victory for himself and the Air Force. According to Weyland, when Clark realized “he wasn’t going to win on getting air units attached to corps and divisions . . . he became kind of a convert. He became convinced that he was of bigger stuff than just running the Army.”¹⁶⁹ Weyland played up Clark’s joint commander role and the two generals actually became good friends. In fact, Weyland had a hand in writing the opening paragraph (“No one service or arm of any service is responsible for the war. . . .”) of Clark’s air-ground operations letter above. For the Army, Navy, and Marine officers who found Air Force CAS suspect, Clark’s letter and stance on air-ground operations must have been disappointing. While Clark pushed for a more aggressive implementation of the JTD, he, like Ridgway, was not interested in setting off a major interservice controversy.¹⁷⁰ In addition to his air-ground letter, Clark attached two other documents: “Factors Affecting the Close Air Support Situation in Korea” and “Proposed Experiment on Air-Ground Operations.”¹⁷¹ Compared to his earlier statements and actions with Almond, the Far East commander seems to have done a little more in-depth analysis on the CAS controversy itself. Clark made some very astute observations in the first attachment of his letter that are highlighted below:

1. There appears to be a general lack of understanding among Army and Air Force personnel that air-ground operations in the combat zone are the direct result of policies arrived at in consultation and enunciated by the Tactical Air Force and Army commanders and of plans developed by staffs at Tactical Air Force – Army level.
2. There is a tendency on the part of ground officers, at all levels, to give the Air Force credit for greater capabilities than they possess. The average ground officer visualizes that the Air Force is capable of inflicting far greater damage to bunkers, to troops in open trenches, to scattered and partially protected supply installations and of saturating large areas, than is possible. They assign them a capability of providing a 24-hour a day interdiction block of critical road junctions, which is false. They become disappointed in the results and invariably this disappointment is expressed in blame leveled at the

system, rather than the basic cause, the fault of not appreciating fully the limitations and the capabilities of the air arm. The normal supporting weapons in division and corps should be fully utilized as a matter of first priority. Calls for close air support should be made only when available ground weapons are fully employed and cannot furnish the required support.

3. The majority of officers at company, battalion, regiment, division, and corps level do not appreciate the fact that the Fifth Air Force is assigned air missions of greater scope than normally assigned to a Tactical Air Force. . . . Our Air Forces must continue to throw the full weight of air attack upon production and repair facilities; supplies, and materiel; military personnel; transportation facilities; and all other major resources important to enemy operations, while at the same time being available to meet unforeseen emergencies. Enemy offensive air capabilities must, of course, be neutralized and kept so, within the restrictions imposed. If we disregard for a moment the front line commander who can never get enough support, either artillery or air, and get back to the Tactical Air Force – Army level where the decision on allocation of available effort to type missions is made, there appears to be no problem existing in jointly selecting the mission desired by both commanders. The records show that during the CCF spring offensive of last year every plane that the Fifth Air Force could get airborne and that possessed a close support capability was on that mission. The full weight of FEAF BomCom (Bomber Command) was also thrown against the enemy. As the front stabilized during the summer and fall the transportation interdiction program was instituted with the complete concurrence of the Army commander and full knowledge that the planes available for close support missions would be extremely limited.
4. The Tactical Air Force – Army versus the Marine system of Air Support. The Marine system, in which one air wing of several groups furnishes all of the required air support of a Marine division, was devised primarily to support the initial phases of an independent amphibious task force. In this type operation the maintenance of air superiority is taken over by other forces and naval gunfire support, though available, is limited in its coverage after the landing of the assault forces and prior to the availability and full utilization of all supporting artillery. Any comparison of the Tactical Air Force – Army and the Marine air-ground systems is faulty in the premise itself, for the two systems have entirely different means available for accomplishing the close air support mission. Further, the Marine system is too expensive in personnel and equipment, and the requirement for planes is too great for this system to be adopted for joint Tactical Air Force – Army use where 60-100 divisions may be employed.
5. The Tactical Air Force has probably been its own worst enemy in presenting the close air support problem to Army officers. This is based on the psychological reaction of the average Army officer resulting from the Air Force method of presenting their missions. This refers to the normal method of expressing basic missions:
 - a. Gaining and maintaining air superiority;
 - b. Isolation of the battlefield; and
 - c. Close support of ground forces.

Army officers without practical joint experience often interpret such a representation to mean that little or nothing is done about the second mission until the

first has been completed, and similarly, little or nothing is done about the third until the second has been accomplished. . . . The Air Force might well state the same thought by indicating that the Tactical Air Force has but one mission, which is: In conjunction with surface forces to inflict maximum damage through air action upon enemy aircraft, materiel and installations, and personnel.

6. It is extremely disappointing to see air ordnance fall at some distance from the target, which is holding off the advance of ground troops. These results can be attributed to pilot error, improper target designation by TACP's and/or mosquito, or the failure of the ground forces to properly describe or mark the target. These deficiencies can and must be countered by constant training in close air support operations by the air and ground forces.

It is considered that a clearer understanding and appreciation by our ground and air commanders at all echelons of the above mentioned factors will tend to reduce the criticism currently being leveled at the Tactical Air Force - Army system of close air support (emphasis in original).¹⁷²

The second attachment in Clark's letter was titled "Proposed Experiment on Air-Ground Operations." The so-called experiment was developed under the premise that the current air-ground system was sound but that there was always room for improvement.¹⁷³ Several positive aspects came out of the experiment. There was an "increase in the number of ground officers enrolled in the Fifth Air Force's three-day ground operations school in Seoul."¹⁷⁴ Attendance also increased at the Far East Air-Ground Operations School at Johnson Air Base in Japan. The school opened in May 1952 by direction of General Ridgway and began to indoctrinate larger numbers of Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force officers in the CAS system. In addition, large groups of pilots went on tours of the front lines, and a traveling Army-Air Force indoctrination team began visiting Army units. Although this program lasted a short time, it proved successful in spreading the CAS word.¹⁷⁵

While Weyland fully supported Clark's proposal for increased air-ground training and awareness, "several aspects of the 'experiment' proposed doctrinal challenges."¹⁷⁶ First, Clark wanted to dedicate a certain number of sorties to provide training for battalion-sized operations. Millett says, "Although he did not demand that these sorties come from on-station aircraft, Clark wanted to see if Fifth Air Force aircraft could go from strip-alert to their targets in thirty minutes using the JTD request system."¹⁷⁷ Second, the Army commander thought that the two services should create a JOC for each corps. In theory, this meant that each "corps commander might exercise operational control of a set number of sorties assigned his JOC by Fifth Air Force."¹⁷⁸ Third, Clark wanted to have air control capability at the battalion level. Although he sidestepped an earlier proposal for the Fifth Air Force to provide a TACP for every battalion, he did suggest that Army officers be allowed to control air strikes under the guidance of regimental Air Force liaison officers.¹⁷⁹

Weyland, ever suspicious of the Army's attempt to gain the upper hand, suspected that Clark had more than an "experiment" in mind. However, he

eventually agreed to support Clark's proposal, with a few changes. First, he insisted that battalion-training exercises utilize real ground force attacks.¹⁸⁰ As it was, "aircraft were already being lost to ground fire at a rate of one in every 382 sorties and were being damaged at a rate of one in every 26 sorties."¹⁸¹ Weyland commented, "This degree of enemy opposition insures realistic training for our pilots, but offers little more realism for the ground soldier than witnessing an exercise at the Air Proving Ground or the Infantry School."¹⁸² Second, Weyland emphasized the centralized control of airpower by an Airmen and "insisted that there by [sic] no transfer of sorties that the JOC could not revoke."¹⁸³ Both Weyland and Barcus had difficulty accepting a plan that allocated as many as 100 sorties for the exclusive use of a corps commander.¹⁸⁴ Third, Weyland would not agree to allow the Army to perform the TACP function, but he did state that the Air Force would provide "infantry battalions with TACPs when and if required."¹⁸⁵ Weyland ended his counterproposal to Clark by reminding his joint commander that Dwight D. Eisenhower approved of the current doctrine and had a well-known distaste for interservice conflict: "In other words, Clark would accept FEAF's conditions for the air-ground experiment or be ready to make his case in Washington."¹⁸⁶ In short, Clark implemented Weyland's changes and ordered both the Eighth Army and the Fifth Air Force to begin his program.¹⁸⁷



Center, Gen Mark W. Clark, signs the armistice agreement; left to right: General Weyland and Vice Adm Robert P. Briscoe, NAVFE commander. (Reprinted from William T. Y'Blood, "Down in the Weeds, Close Air Support in Korea." In *The Korean War Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Edition* [Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2002].)

Notes

1. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 163–64.
2. Lewis, *Lt Gen Ned Almond*, 51.
3. Ibid., 88.
4. Finney, *History of the Air Corps Tactical School*, 130.
5. Lewis, *Lt Gen Ned Almond*, 51.
6. Ibid., 52.
7. Ibid., 53.
8. Ibid.
9. Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 490.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea*, 148.
14. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 16.
15. Millett, "Korea," 370.
16. Ibid.
17. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 165.
18. Millett, "Korea," 370.
19. Ibid.
20. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 19.
21. Ibid., 18.
22. Y'Blood, *Three Wars of Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer*, 247.
23. Millett, "Korea," 370.
24. Ibid., 369.
25. Ibid.
26. Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 4.
27. Ibid., 18.
28. Millett, "Korea," 370.
29. Ibid., 370–71.
30. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 19. Both Airmen had a hand in persuading Adm C. Turner Joy, the Seventh Fleet commander, to leave the Marine aircraft in place at Kimpo.
31. Ibid.
32. Weyland, interview by Dr. James C. Hasdorff and Brig Gen Noel F. Parrish, 19 November 1974, 116, copy of transcript acquired from Dr. David R. Mets. Transcript also located in Weyland Papers, Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA).
33. Weyland, "Some Lessons of the Korean War."
34. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 176.
35. Weyland, "Some Lessons of the Korean War," 5.
36. Ibid., 1.
37. Ibid., 5.
38. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 178.
39. Weyland, "Some Lessons of the Korean War," 8.
40. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 178.
41. Weyland, "Some Lessons of the Korean War," 8.
42. Lewis, *Lt Gen Ned Almond*, 54.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Millett, "Korea," 371.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.

51. Higgins, *Air Support in the Korean Campaign*, n.p.
52. Ibid., 2.
53. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 164.
54. Dickens, *A Survey of Air-Ground Doctrine*, 32.
55. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 19.
56. Dickens, *A Survey of Air-Ground Doctrine*, 33.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 34.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., 35.
61. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 164; and Higgins, *Air Support in the Korean Campaign*, 23.
62. Higgins, *Air Support in the Korean Campaign*, 23.
63. Dickens, *A Survey of Air-Ground Doctrine*, 27.
64. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 166.
65. Dickens, *A Survey of Air-Ground Doctrine*, 27.
66. Ibid., 28.
67. Maj Gen O. P. Weyland, vice commander FEAFF, to Maj Gen E.E. Partridge, commanding general, Fifth Air Force, memorandum, 19 January 1951.
68. Ibid., 2.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., 2–3.
71. Ibid., 3.
72. Weyland to Partridge, Staff Study Comments.
73. Futrell, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 202.
74. Weyland, interview, 119.
75. Weyland to Partridge, Staff Study Comments.
76. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 60.
77. Ibid., 61.
78. Ibid., 61–62.
79. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 188.
80. Millett, "Korea," 372.
81. Ibid.
82. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 62.
83. Millett, "Korea," 372.
84. Ibid.
85. Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant," 188–89.
86. Ibid., 189.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid., 190.
89. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 34.
90. Futrell, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 772 (Appendix: Major Air Commanders of the Korean War).
91. Lt Gen O. P. Weyland, USAF, to John C. Mayfield (Houston, Texas), letter, 1 June 1951.
92. Futrell, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 374.
93. Ridgway, *Korean War*, 178–79.
94. Millett, "Korea," 374.
95. Weyland, "Air Campaign in Korea," 20.
96. Ibid.
97. Millet, "Korea," 374.
98. Y'Blood, *Three Wars of Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer*, 432.
99. Ibid.
100. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 35.

101. Lewis, *Lt Gen Ned Almond*, 88.
102. Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, 243.
103. Maj Gen Frank F. Everest, Fifth Air Force commander, to Lt Gen O. P. Weyland, FEAF commander, memorandum, 17 September 1951, 18 September 1951.
104. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 36.
105. Maj Gen Frank F. Everest, Fifth Air Force commander, to Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, commander in chief, FEC, through Lt Gen O. P. Weyland, FEAF commander, and Gen James A. Van Fleet, Eighth Army commander, memorandum, 5 October 1951.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. Lt Gen O. P. Weyland, FEAF commander, to Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, commander in chief, FEC, memorandum, 6 October 1951.
109. Gen James A. Van Fleet, Eighth Army commander, to Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, commander in chief, FEC, memorandum, 6 October 1951.
110. Millett, "Korea," 382-83.
111. Ibid., 383.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid.
115. Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, commander in chief, FEC, to Maj Gen Gerald C. Thomas, 1st Marine Division, commander, memorandum, 15 October 1951.
116. Ibid.
117. Millett, "Korea," 383.
118. Ibid.
119. Maj Gen Frank F. Everest, Fifth Air Force commander, to Lt Gen O. P. Weyland, FEAF commander, memorandum, 18 December 1951, 19 December 1951.
120. Ibid., 2.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid., 3.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid., 4.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Gen James A. Van Fleet, Eighth Army commander, to Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, commander in chief, FEC, memorandum, 20 December 1951.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Maj Gen Frank F. Everest, Fifth Air Force commander, to Lt Gen O. P. Weyland, FEAF commander, memorandum, 23 December 1951.
132. Diary Extract of Lt Gen O. P. Weyland, 31 December 1951.
133. Ibid., 3.
134. Ibid., 4.
135. Ibid.
136. Ibid., 5.
137. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 37.
138. Weyland Diary Extract, 5.
139. Ibid.
140. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 37.
141. Ibid.
142. Weyland Diary Extract, 6.
143. Lt Gen O. P. Weyland, FEAF commander, to Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, commander in chief, FEC, memorandum, 20 December 1951, 12 January 1952,
144. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 111.

145. Ibid.
146. Weyland Diary Extract, 6.
147. Ibid.
148. Ibid.
149. Ibid.
150. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 111.
151. Weyland Diary Extract, 8.
152. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 111.
153. Ibid.
154. Weyland, interview, 191.
155. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 40.
156. Weyland, interview, 192.
157. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 40.
158. Futrell, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 772.
159. Lt Gen Glenn O. Barcus, Fifth Air Force commander, to Lt Gen O. P. Weyland, FEAF commander, memorandum, 14 June 1951, 15 June 1952.
160. Ibid.
161. Ibid. Koje-do was a small island located a few miles southwest of Pusan. The island was rocky and mountainous, with almost no flat land for any type of buildup. The island was used for enemy prisoners of war. Because Koje-do was extremely overcrowded, it was the scene of many intense mass demonstrations, riots, mutinies, breakouts, and the subjugation of non-Communist prisoners. See Ridgway, *Korean War*, 206–10.
162. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 40.
163. Ibid.
164. Weyland, interview, 192.
165. Ibid., 192–93.
166. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 41.
167. Ibid.
168. Gen Mark W. Clark, commander in chief, FEC, to commanding general, Eighth Army; commanding general, XVI Corps; commander, US Naval Forces Far East; commanding general, Far East Air Forces; memorandum, 11 August 1952.
169. Weyland, interview, 194.
170. Millett, "Korea," 388.
171. Clark memorandum, 11 August 1952.
172. Ibid.
173. Ibid.
174. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 41.
175. Ibid.
176. Millett, "Korea," 388.
177. Ibid.
178. Ibid.
179. Ibid.
180. Ibid.
181. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 41.
182. Ibid.
183. Millett, "Korea," 389.
184. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 41.
185. Millett, "Korea," 389.
186. Ibid.
187. Ibid.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The Korean War has been a very complex one. It has been a laboratory study of limited military action in the support of a very difficult political situation. Furthermore it has provided the air forces in particular with an opportunity to develop concepts of employment beyond the World War II concepts of tactical and strategic operations.

—Gen O. P. Weyland

Gen Otto “O. P.” Weyland was the ideal choice to lead the Air Force in the Korean War. With CAS coming under increased scrutiny in July 1950, General Vandenberg (chief of staff) called on Weyland to provide his tactical expertise and to help General Stratemeyer stabilize the FEAF effort. Primarily, a bomber pilot throughout his career, Stratemeyer welcomed Weyland as his vice commander of operations for his experience in tactical airpower. Later, in May 1951, Vandenberg once again called on Weyland to lead the FEAFs. This time, however, Vandenberg wanted Weyland to become the commander after General Stratemeyer’s unfortunate heart attack and subsequent medical retirement. In both instances, Weyland had a tremendous impact on the outcome of operations. Korea, in what would be the United States Air Force’s first real test, was a war for which they had not been armed or trained.

During the initial stages of the conflict, tactical air operations were hap-hazard at best. The Army and Air Force look at war from two sharply contrasting points of view. Most Army officers considered it axiomatic that the ultimate outcome of any war is decided by the man on the ground with a weapon. The primary force to be reckoned with was the enemy ground formation. But virtually all thinking soldiers were also painfully aware of their need for air support—first, to keep the enemy air force off their backs and, second, to reduce the effectiveness of the enemy’s ground formations. Airmen lived in an entirely different mental and physical universe. They did not accept the axiom that the ultimate result came from the man on the ground. Many Airmen viewed airpower as a liberating force that produced tactical, operational, and strategic results quite independently of land formations.

There was a tendency among many to regard all such air operations against ground forces merely as support of the army. This generated misguided concepts of organization, control, and employment that tended to affect adversely a smoothly functioning team. But more basically, it prevented us from seeing the possibilities of employing both air and surface forces in the most effective combined strategy. Is it not better to recall that land, sea, and air forces were committed in support of the overall mission

CONCLUSION

of the theater commander? Each must counter those threats that it is best equipped to counter. Each must exploit those opportunities for offensive action that will pay the biggest dividends. Each must capitalize upon the professional skill of its leadership. And, each must support the other. We could then speak of the firepower delivered by air on the battle line, which was integrated with the maneuver and fire of the army, in terms of support of the army in its mission.

If we took such a view, it should have been less difficult to see that overall strategy must be geared to the air situation, and the capabilities of the friendly air forces as much as to ground forces concepts of maneuver and fire. There should likewise be no stigma attached to the concept that ground force strategy may be designed to exploit the effects of air strategy. If the objectives and situation were such that airpower must be exploited to the fullest to be successful, the ground forces must support the air forces.

Gen Otto P. Weyland, USAF
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